





CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Cover: With the addition of arcade coverage in VG&CE (see the first installment of Destination Arcadia on page 90), we felt that the comic-book style of Atari's Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters would be a suitable subject.

Art: Alan Hunter







JANUARY 1990



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by Maurice Malyneaux

This innovotive "looking gloss" project pushes computer technology in wild directions-and moy offect how we ploy video gomes in the future.

GOING FOR THE DRAGONS: WONDER BOY III STRATEGY GUIDE, PART I

by Claytan Walnum

This detoiled strotegy guide will help you smooth over the rough spots os you toke Wonder Boy through his third odventure on the Sego Moster System.

80 LIFE IN WAR TIMES: P.O.W. STRATEGY GUIDE

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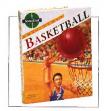
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by Andy Eddy and Patrick J. Kelley

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Editor-in-Chief LEE PAPPAS

Executive Editor ANDY EDDY

ociate Editor PATRICK J. KELLEY

Art Director LAURIE FERGUSDN

Assistant Art Director STEVE MELIN

Managing Editor DEAN BRIERLY

Computer Entertainment Editor ARNIE KATZ

Computer Entertainment Asacciata Editor BILL KUNKEL

> **News Editor** JOYCE WORLEY

Copy Chief SARAH WEINBERG

Copy Editor NORMA EDWARDS

Editorial Assistant CDLLEEN CREMDRA

Depertment Logo Design MAXINE NAYLOR

Computer Consultants ODELL CHERRY FRANK CDHEN

Chief Typographer DAVID BUCHANAN

Vice-President, Production DONNA HAHNER

Production Assistant STEVE HOPKINS

National Advertising Manager JEFFREY EISENBERG JE PUBLISHER'S REPRESENTATIVES

Address ell inquiries to: 8855 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 302 Los Angelea, CA 90038 (213) 467-2266

> For advertising inquiries only: (800) 678-9321

Advertising Production Director JANICE RDSENBLUM

Advertising Production Coordinator GREGG MITCHELL

Corporete Advertising Director DEBBY EDEN Vice-President, Sales and Merketing

JIM GUSTAFSON Subscriptiona IRENE GRADSTEIN

For subscription information call (818) 760-8983.

Editorial Offices

9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210 (213) 858-7100 (213) 274-7985(Fax)



couple of

exciting for the staff of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. We've seen the magazine grow in size for the: holidays, I've made some television : appearances on the Nickelodeon: cable network (keep your eyes open : Sunday mornings for reruns of the:

VG&CE), and best of all, we've discussed how to make the magazine better for our readers. Among the many changes and additions we'll be implementing:

☐ An easier-to-read grade in addition to ratings on various criteria

A more colorful appearance. showing more of the games you are interested in

☐ A section, called Destination Arcadia, devoted to arcade games

This last item is one that we are really excited about. We've received a number of letters requesting the addition of coin-operated games to the pages of VG&CE, and here they are. We recently (I'm writing this in late September) returned from the AMOA (Amusement and Music Operators Association) show in Las Vegas where we were exposed to all forms of coinop machines-video games, pinball, jukeboxes, etc. The information we gathered at this show has been turned into a survey of the latest games that : you'll be seeing in your neighborhood arcade over the next few months. (See page 90 for the whole story.) And in :

coming issues, we'll he taking

months have been pretty; detailed peeks at the newest and hottest games, such as this month's look at Atari's Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters.

We are also following some other interesting stories for VG&CE, such as the amazing Cyberspace project that our correspondent Mau-Total Panic programs featuring: rice Molyneaux covers in this issue.

> The future of electronic entertainment takes on many forms, and we'll keep you informed of all developments that we get our hands on.

Lastly, we are making major changes in the way

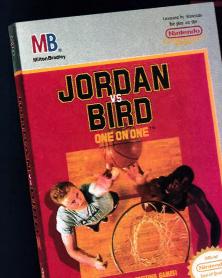
review section, featuring an overall: the magazine is put together: We're now using the powerful Macintosh computer and its desktop-publishing abilities to lay out pages. We expect some rough spots during the transition, but figure we'll switch over to this new technology quickly-a process that will make vG&CE even better

> But, as we've said so often in the past, you are the final judge of whether or not we are successful. We do take the time to read all the letters that we receive from all over the world and use this input to make VG&CE the best electronic-game publication. If you have any comments you wish to pass on to us, just drop a note to vG&CF, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

> As always, thanks for picking us up, and we look forward to hearing from you.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor





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- LARRY BIRD'S3 POINT SHOOT OUT

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Milon's Secret Castle

In pre-historic times, where ancient dinosaur creatures ruled, the adventures of Dino-Riki began. A courageous young man, Dino-Riki is determined to establish mankind's future in this violent age. Dino-Riki must fight his way through totus swamps, dark caverns, deep canyons, deserts and giant dinosaur bosses.



ADVENTURES OF



If you think you have played the hardest of all video games, try this one. Each level has a different challenge; the higher the level, the tougher the challenge! Can you beat the monsters?! How many coins can you collect?! Are you ready for the challenge of your game playing career? This is it!!!





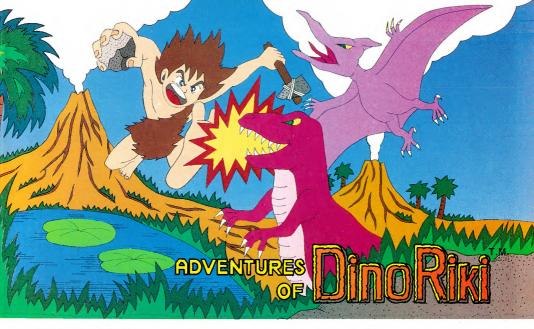
Nintendo

(Nintendo)



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Infocom Info

Your article entitled "The Adventure Revolution" (VG&CE, September 1988) is both misleading and seriously flawed.

First, you make it sound as if Infocom is out of business. A call to Mediagenic verified that they are alive and well and will continue to release new titles.

Secondly, you claim that text adventures are passe. Well, they certainly do not have the flash of arcadetype games, but they continue to provide the archetype for a majority of the multiuser games and single-user systems. It is a genre unto itself. Just as radio did not become obsolete with the advent of television, and just as Archie Bunker did not replace The Honeymooners, interactive text adventures will remain a profitable medium for the game designers of the future.

-Martin Green Newark, New Jersey

In your September issue you stated that Infocom was finished as an independent entity. I was heartbroken! I love a great graphics game, but nothing beats a super text adventure. I called the number in the Infocom magazine and asked if they had gone out of business. They said no and laughed. Maybe I misinterpreted the article. Could you please clear up my confusion?

—Greg Johnson Irvine, California

To date, we've received quite a few letters from devoted Infocom fans wondering what tha story was about. We contacted Loretta Stagnitto of Mediagenic, Infocom's parent company, for the straight scoop. As we go to press, Infocom

has relocated its operations to Mediagenic's West Coast headquarters. This move is designed to accomplish two things.

- First, Infocom's programmers will be able to more fully utilize the resources of its parent company. (With the new turn toward graphics in thair games, Infocom can benefit from Mediagenic's expertise.)
- Second, tha move is a cost-cutting measura designed to curb the operating losses that Infocom has postad since 1986, when they were acquired by Mediagenic. Stagnitto explained that the company will continue to produce their high-quality interactive adventuras and that the relocation is seen as a positive step in the company's evolution.



First, let me say that your magazine is the best video-game magazine available on the newsstands of America, and I look forward to it every month. However, now that the 16-bit game systems are appearing on the market, why do you devote so much space to the old 8-bit games? Who would prefer to drive a VW when for a little more you can own a Porsche? Let's pay more attention to the 16-bit future than the 8-bit past!

-Mark D. Shark Dallas, Texas

Thanks for writing, Mark. We're very excited about the new machines as well and can't wait to see what's in store. But you can't ignore the fact that the 8-bit machines are still a major force in the marketplace and

make up a big share of users. A number of great games can still be had for our "old" machines—enough to hold off putting them out to pasture and keep us coming back for more.



Complaint Department

I think your magazine is great, but I have a major complaint concerning your monthly Easter Egg Hunt section. I spend my precious time and energy finding hints in games and sending them to you, but do I ever get printed? No! Instead, I see tips printed that people have obviously read somewhere else. Get with it! I've written letters often and sent in lots of tricks, but I still haven't gotten printed. You published one that I think was mine, but I never got a \$10 check or saw my name in your magazine.

—John Sammons Halls, Tennessee

Sorry that you feel slighted, John. We're grateful for the support and information that we get from our readers, especially the gaming tips. Unfortunately, we have neither the space nor money to print and pay for all of the duplicate tips that we get. We try to be fair and print the first tips as they come in. Many times we get dozens of duplicate tips from our readers, so in fairness we must go with the one who gave us the scoop first.

With regards to people sending in hints from other publications, we don't require people to find the hints themselves, since most of these sequences aren't the type that you're likely to find out on your own. We also figure that many of our readers read VG&CE exclusively, so the tips we print are new to them.

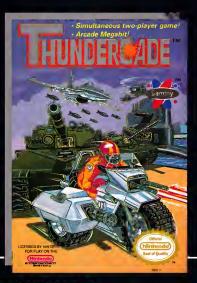
Don't be discouraged—we're always searching for these types of things and hope that you'll continue playing away. With all of the new

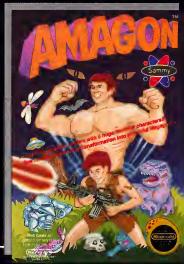


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games that are constantly being released, the opportunity still exists to get your name in print and pass on a helpful hint to your fellow game players out there.



Apple Pickings

Help! I own an Apple IIGS computer system with a 3 ½" disk drive. I'd really love to purchase games for it, but I have yet to see any in that size format. Do any companies make them in that size for the Apple IIGS? If so, would I have to special order them? Any help you could give me would be most appreciated. I'm almost ready to give up!

—Corey Sent Leavenworth, Kansas

Don't give up yet, Corey—there are a lot of games released on 3 ½" disks. For example, we contacted Anita Deiter of Taito Software in Canada, who gave us the following titles that they distribute in your format: Qix, Arkanoid II: The Revenge of Doh, Rastan and Renegade. Get in touch with some of the big computersoftware stores in your area, and get a listing of the other games that they sell. I'm sure that with a little footwork, you'll discover that finding games in your format is easier than you think.



Complaints, Part II

I know that most of your readers write to you with positive letters, but I have a small complaint. I'm an Atari 7800 owner, and what got me started reading your magazine was the Atari banner you have on the cover. On closer examination, I have seen only three Atari XE reviews and no 7800 reviews. Now, I realize that Nintendo is the hot machine and Atari's grip on the videogame market is slipping, but please don't let it be that way in your magazine. I do hope that you can include more Atari news in future issues, because Atari is still very much alive.

—Chohong Choi Ridgewood, New York No doubt about it, Atari is still very much alive in the gaming world. (The name Atari actually exists in two separate companies: Atari Corp. is the company responsible for the ST line of computers and the Lynx, and Atari Games not only creates coinoperated machines for the arcade but also brings out game cartridges through Tengen. They are in no way related to each other.)

With the release of their new Lynx machine, Atari Corp. is still a force to be reckoned with in home video games.

Also, see the feature elsewhere in this issue on another hot product with the Atari name on it, Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters. Atari Games' new coin-op, S.T.U.N. Runner, will pick up in popularity where Escape leaves off.

Sadly, while we'd like to cover Atari products more extensively, we have to cover the products that are favored by the majority of our readership. You'll notice that NES products (on the video-game side) and IBM PC games (on disk) find their way onto our pages more than any others.

If Atari XE or 7800 systems become popular again, you can be sure that we'll be there to write about it. We're banking on Atari Corp. to start the ball rolling again with Lynx and their yet-unannounced 16bit system.



No Complaint Department

I really admire the fact that you cover everything in your magazine. Sure, I own a Nintendo Entertainment System, but I also have a Sega Master System, an IBM PC and an Amiga. I say, cover them all—don't just go for what's popular or trendy. You guys are doing a great job keeping us tuned in to what's happening out there, and your tips can't be beat. While other magazines concentrate on "Wow! Nintendo!" you offer balanced coverage.

—Cliff Ogden Foley, Alabama

Thanks! It never fails to swell our heads to hear praise like that, but it also tells us that we are doing our jobs. Keep reading VG&CE, and we won't let you down.



Future of Gaming

I would like to commend you on a very well-put-together magazine. From the News Bits column to Easter Egg Hunt, I can tell that you guys really know what you are doing.

Lately, I've been somewhat disappointed by most of the games that I've purchased—namely their lack of challenge, fun and interesting endings). This has made me lose faith in the future for finding exciting games for my NES.

But you've really shed light on the future with your recent articles on the Sega Genesis and the NEC TurboGrafx-16. I never dreamed that the change in gaming could happen so soon!

I do have one request to make, however. Please give the arcade scene more in-depth coverage. There are many great coin-op games out there like Narc and Turbo Outrun that many people have never heard of and would greatly enjoy. Thanks for making the magazine as great as it is!

—Tjarren James Lee's Summit, Missouri

Your request comes at a good time, Tjarren. You can now check out the magazine on a monthly basis to find out what's new, what's hot and what's not in our new Destination Arcadia column, devoted exclusively to coverage of the arcade industry.

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VibeoGames & Computer Entertainment, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all the mail we receive.

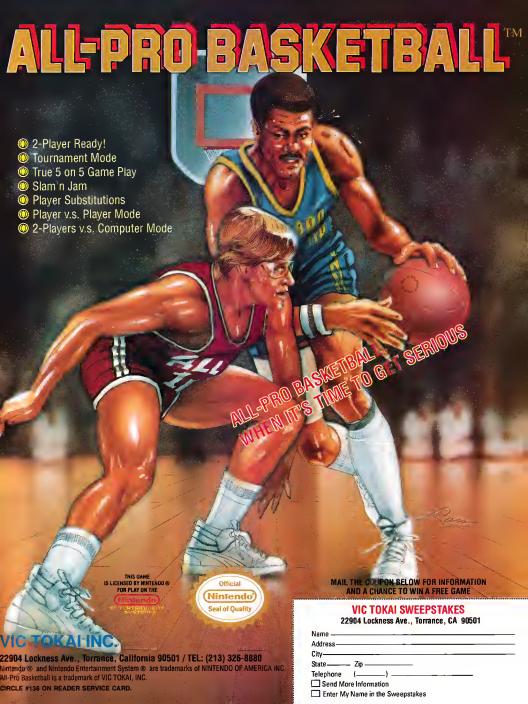
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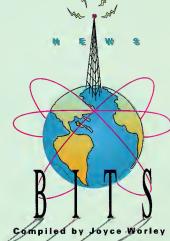
Epyx Exits Publishing

Epyx, a longtime marketer of home computer games, has announced that it is leaving the publishing field. The California-based outfit plans to remain active in the program development area, according to a mid-September announcement. Accompanying this abrupt change of direction was a mass firing that reduced Epyx's staff to 12 people.

Epyx began its corporate life in the early 1980s as Automated Simulations. After some initial success with Temple of Apshai and Star Warrior, the company seemed to lose momentum. The arrival of Mike Katz from Coleco to head the renamed Epyx ushered in its most successful era. During the last five years, Epyx became especially well-known for its multievent, action-strategy sports anthologies.

Some of Epyx's top hits included Jumpman Jr., Summer Games, Winter Games, World's Greatest Baseball Game and California Games. Epyx also issued Impossible Mission, which became one of the most popular and influential games in the United Kingdom.

Although considered one of the "big four" publishers, Epyx experienced a succession of problems over the last few years. The ill-starred venture into VCR



games, generally derivative product and the expense of developing the Lynx portable video-game system all contributed to Epyx's shaky position.

EA Lures Labels From Mediagenic

Electronic Arts has written the latest chapter in the unending tug-of-war among publishers for the prime affiliate software labels. The country's leading computer game creator has lured a pair of high-quality affiliates, New World Computing



and Lucasfilm, to its banner. Prior to these new agreements, both were part of Mediagenic's affiliated-label program.

New World is a fairly small company, but it has done very well with its two fantasy role-playing programs, Might & Magic and Might & Magic II. Adding New World to the EA fold appears to be an attempt to fill the gap caused by the 1988 move of Interplay Productions, creator of the Bard's Tale series, to Mediagenic.

Lucasfilm produces a fairly good volume of new releases annually. Major titles include Battlehawks 1944, Maniac Mansion and Rescue on Fractalus.

It recently released Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, developed as a coventure with US Gold.

A Mediagenic official, reached for comment by vo&ce, said that the affiliate realignment signals Mediagenic's renewed faith in its in-house development capabilities. The company, which distributes games under the Activision and Gamestar brands, plans to concern.

brands, plans to concentrate marketing and sales efforts on its own titles in the future. Mediagenic has no immediate plans to replenish its affiliate lineup.

Cinemaware Returns to Affiliate-Label

Cinemaware is going full circle. The prestigious publisher began life as an affiliate label (with Mindscape) and is now returning to that status, this time with Electronic Arts. The move caught many by surprise, because Cinemaware has had strong earnings both in the United States and Europe.

Founder Bob Jacob, in an exclusive interview with VG&CE, put the move in terms of resource allocation. "We'll concentrate on





what we do best," says Jacob. "We'd rather develop products and have

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someone else market them."

What is not known at this writing is what effect the change in status will have on the affiliates and design groups that Cinemaware has established in the last 18 months. including Spotlight. It appears these operations will continue under the Cinemaware umbrella distributed by Electronic Arts, but there has been no official statement.

Cinemaware's extensive line of arcade adventures includes Defender of the Crown, Rocket Ranger, Lords of the Rising Sun and It Came From the Desert, It started a sports simulation line in 1988 that now consists of TV Sports: Football and TV Sports: Basketball.

Top Coin-Ops of September 1989

Figures courtesy of Replay magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

Best Upright Videos

- 1. Off Road by Leland
- 2. Hard Drivin' by Atari
- 3. Operation Thunderbolt by Taito
- 4. WWF Superstars by Amer. Tech.
- 5. Crime Fighters by Konami
- 6. Arch Rivals by Bally/Midway
- 7. Turbo Outrun by Sega 8. Final Lap by Atari
- 9. Chase H.Q. by Taito
- 10. Mechanized Attack by

Best Coin-Op Softwore

- 1. Golden Axe by Sega
- 2. Ninja Gaiden by Tecmo 3. Strider by Capcom
- 4. Bottom of the Ninth by Konami
- 5. Splatterhouse by Sharp **Image**
- 6. Cabal by Fabtek
- 7. Wrestle War by Sega

The Softwers Publishers would be followed up by ths

SPA Establishes Piracy Hot Line

Association (SPA) has instelled e frss number for uss in reporting csses of softwara pirscy. The new ssrvice is for use by individusts wishing to finger unsuthorized ssles or duplication of softwere, herd-disk losding, internal corporste copying end slectronic bullatin boards.

SPA Exscutive Director Ken Wasch explsinsd the resson for the special phone number: "Until now, users end eggrisved individusis have had no clear vehicle through which they could report ssrious copyright violations. Now ths 800 number will make it eesy for individuals to report cases of software pirecy." Mr. Wesch want on to sxplsin that all raports NW, Washington, DC 20036.

SPA. "Hopefully, through 'cesse and dasist' latters, litigation against copyright violators may be svoided."

Pirstss csn expsct strict psnelties. The SPA has stready filed over 20 lewsuits against dealers, mail-order operations, technical collages and corporations for the sale or use of illegal software copies.

To report cases of softwere pirscy, contect the Pirecy Hotline et (800) 388-PIR8. For s copy of the SPA publication "Softwars Uss end the Lew," send s self-sddressed, stemped envslops to Softwere Publishers Assn., 1101 Connecticut Avenus

- 8. Shinobi by Sega
- 9. Champ. Sprint by Atari
- 10. Roadblasters by Atari

Best New Uprights

- 1. Gang Wars by SNK
- 2. Dvnamite Duke by Fabtek
- 3. Crackdown by Sega 4. Escape From the Planet
- of the Robot Monsters by Atari
- 5. Dynasty Wars by Capcom

FCI Drops 800 Line, Starts Newsletter

FCI (Fujisankei Communications International, Inc.) has discontinued its 800 customer-support line and asked that calls go to its new phone-counseling number, (312) 968-0425. According to the videogame publisher, it experienced a dramatic increase in its number of calls when Ultima and Hydlide were introduced for play on the NES. It has since put in several more phone lines to make it easier for anxious gamers to reach their phone counselors.

FCI also announced the introduction of a newsletter. The first mailing was scheduled for pre-Christmas 1989, to be sent to over 10,000 consumers on the company's mailing list. The fourcolor newsletter will have hints, previews of upcoming releases and a general mix of information for NES gamers, Anyone not already on the FCI list can receive the newsletter by calling (312) 968-0425.

Acclaim Has Total Recall

Acclaim Entertainment announced that it has signed a worldwide

licensing agreement with Carolco Pictures, Inc. for its next futuristic motion picture, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Acclaim has exclusive rights to create software for NES and the Nintendo Game Boy portable based on the adventure-thriller Total Recall, directed by Paul RoboCop Verhoeven.

Total Recall is set in 2074: a time when two opposing governments rule a war-torn earth. The script, written by Ron Alien Shusset, is said to utilize some unique special effects. Tri-Star Pictures will release the film in June 1990.

Williams' Flipper Cops Out

Williams' Electronics, coin-op's pinball king, features a clutch of features and an actual storyline in Police Force. The pinball machine introduces a moving police car that travels along a track, releasing locked balls back onto the playfield, and a center





VideoGames

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CKNAA

ramp that increases in value to a potential of unlimited million-point scoring. Another first claimed by the new coin snatcher is "take highest score." It lets players double the score by making two consecutive ramp shots on the last ball in play.

The plot turns the player into a police officer trying to get a group of no-goodniks into jail. The cast of villains includes an animalistic lot: Machine Gun



NES Gets First Four-Play Action

Tradewest's release for the Nintendo Entertainment System, Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's Super Off-Road, claims to be the first video game for NESers that allows simultaneous fourplayer action. Originally

released in 1989 as a coin-op, the game has been redesigned for use with the NES

Satellite, a new peripheral that provides four independent controllers.

Super Off-Road has eight stadium courses, each of which has two configurations. Players drive trucks that must navigate jumps, mud holes and hairpin turns. The game can also be played by one or two gamers, using regular Nintendo controllers. In this case, four cars are shown on the track, but those not driven by humans are controlled by the NES.

Ivan "Ironman" Stewart started off-road racing in 1971 and has since won three Baja 500s, the Mint 400, the Gold Coast 300, four Score World Championships and dozens of other races. According to Tradewest President Byron Cook, Ironman had a great deal of input in the creation of the game, which was designed by Leland Corp. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Tradewest). Cook explained: "Our goal was to translate some of the danger and challenge of real-life racing to a video game. With help from Ironman, we were able to make Super Off-Road far more realistic than we'd thought possible."

Taxan Contest for Star Soldiers

Taxan has a great prize for the top scorer of its new NES game, Star Soldier. The first-place winner will receive a free advance copy of every Nintendo game Taxan makes from now on. In addition, the high-scoring Star Soldier player will

receive a Sony portable stereo CD player. The second-prize winner gets the next three Taxan software releases, and five third-place winners will receive advance copies of the next two Taxan titles. One-hundred fourth-place winners will get prototypes of the next game marketed by the software company.

Taxan must receive entries by January 30, 1990. Just send a Poleroid snapshot of your winning screen, along with your name and address, to Taxan, Star Soldiers High Score Contest, 161 Nortech Parkway, San Jose, CA 95134. Only one entry per person is allowed.

Sierra Hint Line Goes Round-the-Clack

Sierra has a computerized game-hint line available on a 24-hour basis for players with a touch-tone telephone. Callers are instructed to press numbers on their phone for hints, a customer-support representative or a technical-support representative. If the hint line is selected, the gamer can select hints for the Manhunter, King's Quest, Space Quest, Police Quest and Leisure Suit Larry series or other games not listed.

listed.
Whichever
is chosen,
a menu
provides
various
selec-

The customer-support representatives are available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time, Monday through Friday, but the new



touch-tone hint system is online 24 hours a day by calling (209) 683-6858. Sierra installed this system in order to handle the over 4,000 calls per day that they receive through their 32 open hint lines.

Board Games Remastered for Home Computers

Mastertronic is currently shipping new versions of some of the most well-loved family board games of all time, now programmed for play on most home computers. Included in the company's "Leisure Genius" line of games are remastered versions (to make them hard-disk installable) of Scrabble, Risk, Monopoly and Clue Master Detective.

Scrabble is available for IBM PC, Amiga, C-64, Atari ST, Apple and Macintosh. Risk is ready for the Commodore 64 and Apple II and Monopoly for the Commodore 64, IBM PC, Amiga and Atari ST. The newest title in the quartet is Clue: Master Detective, which the company plans to ship for Apple, IBM,

Commodore 64, Amiga

Nintendo Plans Financial Services System

The folks at Nintendo aren't just playing around anymore. They're seriously interested in new uses for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Nintendo has



Can you outwit and overcome the thoroughly-evil Warlock Lord? His mysterious spell holds Castle Shadowgate captive. Dozens of hidden pitfalls and nasty entities lurk in every corner.

Probe along menacing stone corridors looking for hidden passageways. Discover mysterious artifacts in dark chambers. Clues are there for those bold enough, and wise enough.

Torches. Keys.
Genstones.

Slay a dragon, cross a river of fire. But be careful. A wrong move could bring your quest to an untimely end. A whole world of options are at your command with

dynamic graphics to bring the dark mysteries of the Middle Ages to life.

The question is...are you up to the challenge of Castle Shadowgate?

KEMCO SEIKA



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CIRCLE #110 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

reached an agreement with Fidelity Investments to jointly develop a system to bring financial services to NES





users. Under the terms of the agreement, the companies will manufacture and market a home online financial service for owners of the Nintendo Entertainment System in Canada and the U.S.A.

Nintendo plans to manufacture a modem and controller for use with the NES as the basis of an "NES Network," Like other online networks, this will provide entertainment. educational and informational services, plus interaction with other NES users. Fidelity is working on a special Nintendocompatible cartridge for online NESers to do homesecurities trading. Other services to be provided to video-game users will be personal portfolio management, access to financialmarket information and real-time trading of securities and mutual funds.

Jerry Ruttenbur, vicepresident of network products at Nintendo, explained why his company is so excited about the new venture: "This is a critical step toward the evolution of the Nintendo Entertainment System beyond traditional home video-game play."

More Mediagenic Magic

Mediagenic has released a lineup of new titles with the most diversified themes ever produced by this publisher. Activision's latest voyage into the bizarre unearthed Tonque of the Fatman, a futuristic hand-to-hand combat game against outre' lifeforms. Players assemble their weapons, place their bets with the WageMaker and then face off against grotesqueries like Colonoid, a colony creature







made of thousands of lifeforms, Slasher, who is made of blades and, finally, Mondu the Fat, host of the games.





Also from Activision is Grave Yardage, a football game starring goblins, ogres and ghouls. Players are armed with claws, knives, clubs and energy blasts. Mech Warrior lets gamers control combat robots as mercenary warriors in the 31st century.

Deathtrack has ten major-city tracks and customized vehicles. The racer is armed with lasers, rockets, spikes, machine guns and other weapons. Die Hard is based on the movie. The gamer has to overcome a gang of terror-

ists to save the hostages. Ghostbusters II, based on the movie, gives gamers the goo to get the ghouls and ghosts out of New York City. Finally, Activision's magical exploration of The Manhole is now

available for play on the IBM PC and its compatibles, Macintosh and also for CD-ROM.

Mediagenic's subsidiary Gamestar takes a more serious look at gaming, with a new sports simulation. Face Off is a hockey game where players set their lineup then battle for the Stanley Cup.

The latest release from



Infocom is Mines of Titan, a science-fiction mystery/adventure with head-on and overhead graphic views and menudriven interface. In this role-playing game, the player is a stranded space pilot in a frontier settlement. He must assemble a team, descend into the







mines, fight monsters and find clues.

NEC Takes a Play

In hopes of pumping up the public for their Turbo-Grafx-16 video-game system, NEC launched their



Not doing your homework could be a mistake. Every move you make could jeopardize your fellow rescuers, and those held captive.

RESCUE: The Embassy Mission. The action comes fast and furious. Itchyfingered enemy gunmen. A perilous rappel down the sheer face of the Embassy. If you survive that, don't get cocky. You've still got to outmaneuver and out-think your opponents inside and

mastermind the escape.

There are 15 levels of difficulty, from "Training Mission" to wickedly-fast "Jupiter Mission." Thrills are delivered in bold strokes, with super high quality graphics and animation.

With RESCUE: The Embassy Mission, brainpower is as important as firepower.

KEMCO * SEIKA

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CIRCLE #111 ON READER SERVICE CARD.







Play Tour Challenge, This six-city series of events-featuring over 250 TurboGrafx-16s for playing, as well as music, video and sports exhibitions—gives the audience a chance to see what the TurboGrafy-16 and its new games look like. Through the months of October. November and December, NEC brought the Play Tour to Los Angeles, California, Trumbull, Connecticut, Villa Park, Illinois, Wayne, New Jersey, Marlborough, Massachusetts, and Atlanta, Georgia.

The Los Angeles Play Tour saw over 5,000 people compete in the Challenge, with winners receiving TurboGrafx-16 systems, Murray bikes and Vision Street Wear skateboards and T-shirts.

"We want everyone to have fun," said Ken Wirt, NEC's vice-president of Home Entertainment, "as well as see what the revolution in video games is all about. It's clear there's lots of excitement about the TurboGrafx-16 system."

NEC is using the Play Tour not only to publicize their game system, but also to "audition" potential members for their TurboTeam. The first winner, 17-year-old Jim Hakola (shown in the picture above left), of Lakewood, California, scored 220,080 points on Blazing Lazers, Hakola's grand prize consisted of a TurboGrafx-CD player, a 19inch NEC monitor and a Vision Wear skateboard, in addition to the TurboGrafx-16 system he won by making it to the finals.

Movies, Wizards

Universal Pictures recently released *The Wizard*, a film that features video games as a substan-



tial part of its storyline. The film, starring Fred Savage (star of TV's Wonder Years), Beau Bridges and Christian Slater, focuses on a family with problems so deep that it's falling apart. Corey Woods (Savage) runs off with his half-brother Jimmy, a withdrawn boy with the amazing ability to play even the most difficult video game, and enters Jimmy in the National

Video Games Championship in California.

The story, written by David Chisholm, is based on actual fact. "A neighbor's son had extreme trouble relating to other people and also suffered from poor hand-eve coordina-



tion," Chisholm said. "The father brought the boy several home video games and...the result was that he showed great interest in the games, and his handeye coordination dramatically improved. He began feeling better about himself, and, ultimately, it gave him something he could talk about to his peers."

(Rumor has it that if you look carefully, Wizard watchers may see a copy of VG&CE lying around in a scene or two. Keep your eyes open.)

Dr Joyce Brothers Recommends Neurobics

Leading psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers had a few choice words to say about Neurobics, the puzzle-package introduced in 1989 by Ocean Isle Software.
Brothers expressed confi-





dence that it would help players develop mental fitness, saying: "I am genuinely impressed by Ocean Isle's new software program. Neurobics represents a new category of entertainment-educational software that provides exercise for the brain."

Neurobics is a set of six deductive- and inductive- reasoning puzzles to exercise the pathways between these areas of the brain. Each puzzle has over 25 levels of play and is said to test and improve concentration, short-term memory, reasoning and spatial abilities. Neurobics is available for Apple, IBM and IBM compatibles for \$44,95 direct from the company: (800) 882-8664.

Covox Sound Master PC Gains Game Support

Covox announced that its music-sound enhancement card for PCs is gaining support among microcomputer software developers. Over 60 major developers and publishers have received kits to incorporate sound files for the Sound Master PC into upcoming titles.

Recent titles that support the sound board include IBM and IBM-compatible versions of Windwalker from Origin, Sim-City by Maxis and ABC's Monday Night Football by Data East.



Rastan

SEGA For the Sega Master System (\$44.95)



The king's daughter has just been kidnapped, and Rastan, the barbarian bounty hunter, is called upon trescue her. Because the princess is being held in

Semia, a region infamous for its horrible evil, Rastan knows that his quest will not be an easy one. Nevertheless, he sharpens his blade of steel and begins his journey.

If the above scenario sounds familiar, don't let it bother you. It seems that these days, virtually every video game is based on the kidnapping of someone's daughter, sister or girlfriend. (Why is it always the females that get kidnapped? I'd think a king would command the highest ransom.) Not to mention that just about every video game is a slicing, jumping and ducking contest in which the hero must travel through many dark lands, vanquishing the enemy as he goes.

For some reason we never seem to get bored. I suspect it's because we can't wait to see what beautiful lands and nasty creatures await us around the next bend.

At any rate, Rastan, from Sega, is not the best game in this genre nor is it the worst. Those who yearn for new lands to discover and strange castles to explore will probably find Rastan to be a suitable adventure. However, if you're looking for something original, you won't find it here.

Rastan is made up of seven rounds, each containing three scenes. In the first scene of each round, you control Rastan as he fights his way past many creatures outside the entrance to a castle. In these scenes, Rastan will find tunnels that lead to underground passages; ropes on which to climb and swing; and rafts, bridges, floating rocks and other items that will allow him to cross treacherous waterways.

As Rastan fights, he will sometimes be awarded bonus items that include medicine (restores life), poison (takes away life), the







You're the only one who can save the king's daughter from her kidnappers in Sega's Rastan for the Master System.



golden sheep (completely restores Rastan's life), rings (double points until the effect wears off), rods (increase the length of time defensive objects are effective), necklaces (increases the length of time offensive objects are effective) and cloth (which for some reason destroys every enemy on the screen). Jewels, worth varying amounts of points, are also sometimes awarded.

In addition to these bonus items, Rastan may find different types of weapons, shields and armor, some more effective than others. The most powerful weapon, for example, is the fire sword, which shoots fireballs at the enemy.

Once Rastan makes it to the castle entrance, he will be able to enter and find his way through the corridors to the exit. The castles are not only swarming with enemies, but are also filled with booby traps: spears suddenly protrude from walls and floors; icicles and spiked blocks drop from ceilings; boulders roll down inclines.

When Rastan reaches the exit, he will enter the final scene in the round and must defeat the boss creature for that level. The bosses are tough, of course, but usually you can discover a pattern or trick that will help Rastan win the battle.

Rastan's graphics and sound are about average, pleasing enough to make for a decent game, but not extraordinary. The creatures and scenes are fairly well-rendered, but lack detail.

As with many Sega games, your onscreen character (Rastan, in this case) seems sluggish at times, especially when you need to turn him quickly in order to face an enemy. In addition, it is difficult to get used to this game's jumping mechanism. Only two types of jumps are available: a short jump and a long jump. Neither allow the player to control the figure in the air. All you can do is leap and hope you land where you want to. Interestingly enough, you can perform multiple jumps, such as leaping from the ground to a wall and then off the wall to a higher platform.

To summarize, Rastan is an average game that will keep most players interested long enough to make it worth the price. If

FACE THE FIRE

Weapons of fury.

It's the next century in FORGOTTEN WORLDS, and you're the only one left who can save Mother Earth from savage aliens. Your spaceage weaponry is awesome but so are your obstacles! Armed with an anti-gravity device you can fly through enemy defenses and eradicate the alien bases. But watch out! Missiles, monsters, dragons, robots and laser guns are bombarding you from every direction!

If you're ready to save Earth's defenseless men, women and children, see your favorite software retailer or call Capcom U.S.A. at 408-277-1665



There's havoc in the factory as you blast away the invaders.



The Bronze Dragon is a formidable foe. You never knaw when it will strike!

CAPCOM® USA you're a fan of the rescue-the-princessarcade/adventure-type game, you'll probably enjoy it. Didn't you always want to know what it was like to be a barbarian?

Secret hint: In order to get unlimited men, try this trick. When the Sega logo appears on the screen, hold down the lower-left arrow on the arrow pad simultaneously with Button 1 and Button 2. Hold the buttons down until the title screen appears. The word "Rastan" will be blue if you did it correctly.

-Clayton Walnum

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Boulevard, South San Francisco, CA 94080; (800) USA-SEGA.

The Guardian Leaend BRODERBUND

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$39.95)



It's a shoot-'em-up! No, wait-it's an adventure game! Somehow, The Guardian Legend manages to be both.

As the lone guardian of

Earth, it's up to you to stop the evil-infested world of Naju from completing its long journey to our planet. This can only be accomplished by activating the ten self-destruct mechanisms that have been hidden deep within Naju's alien labyrinths. Naturally, the quardian's mission is complicated by Naju's

inhabitants: hordes of bizarre creatures who don't take kindly to intruders.

Fortunately, the quardian is no pushover: A "highly sophisticated aerobot transformer," it takes the shape of a sleek fighter aircraft during the shoot-'em-up sequences and reverts to a humanoid form when exploring the surface of Naju. You're also equipped with automatic, protective shields and a neat little blaster that never runs out of ammunition. Some of your enemies, however, are nearly immune to your main firepower. For them, you'll need the optional weapons that can be found in the labyrinths or purchased from Naju's friendlier (and more enterprising) residents.

The opening sequence of The Guardian Legend is sure to give a thrill to fans of the "shoot on sight" school of video gaming: a vertically-scrolling alien landscape paves the way for a furious flurry of attackers, and you quite literally "shoot 'em up." It's one of

Though starts out as a hot space blast-'em-up, Broderbund's Guardian Legend leads into an exciting adventure battle futuristic on Earth.





the fastest-moving video battles you'll ever experience. But it's not long before things settle down as the quardian sets out on foot to explore Naju in detail. In fact, the majority of playing time is spent walking around; the flying scenes only occur when the guardian enters one of the locked corridors that lead to the "master monsters." This might be a disappointment to some, but the game really takes on some depth during the exploring segments, and that's when The Guardian Legend starts to shine.

This part of the game is noticeably derivative of Sunsoft's Blaster Master, right down to the pyramid-shaped obstacles that block your path or are blown away for points and energy. Fortunately, the similarities end with visual appearances. There are lots of things to discover; hidden power-ups, special weapons and locked passageways-with the keys to open them. You'll also find messages and tips that were left behind by the last surviving Naju native. Apparently, Naju was once a peaceful world, but after it was conquered by evil invaders, this poor fellow had set out to activate the self-destruct mechanisms himself. It's an interesting plot twist, the likes of which keep The Guardian Legend above the average level of mindlessness.

The shoot-'em-up sequences aren't bad either. Though the backgrounds tend to get a bit repetitious, the barrage of attacking life forms should distract you from this minor shortcoming. The "master monsters" at the end of each corridor are suitably large and

menacing, but they're not unbeatable-the game's difficulty level is well-balanced.

For those of us who may not have invested in a controller with rapid-fire, The Guardian Legend allows you to fire repeatedly simply by holding the "B" button down. I'm surprised this feature isn't more common in the NES library of games. It was a staple of many of the Atari 2600 cartridges of the early '80s.

Admittedly, using a rapid-fire controller will make the guardian fire a bit quicker, but this is still a nice touch.

I've been having a lot of fun with this one. A shoot-'em-up, by my definition, is a game that doesn't really require a great deal of brainpower to play. In fact, I've always thought of the genre as kind of a therapeutic

BAD TO THE BONE

These are the streets. And there are no rules when you do battle here.

STRÉETFIGHTER is strictly survival of the fittest against 8 of the baddest dudes from around the world. Watch out for flying scissor kicks, lethal Ninja weapons, and other evil tricks. Block their attacks while you counter with jabs and roundhouse kicks. Don't drop your guard cause these guys aren't just b-b-b-bad. They're "Bad to the Bone."

So see your favorite software retailer or

call Capcom U.S.A. 408-727-1665. You don't want to keep these guys waiting!



Try a roundhouse kick against on English street tough.



Dodge the lethal Ninja weapons of Geki.



CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



way to blow off steam. You know the type: just fry anything that's unfortunate enough to wander anywhere near your character. Don't worry about any kidnapped princesses or magic spells, just fire at will. But this game is a pleasantly advanced variation on the shoot-'em-up theme—it sort of forces you to think about what you're doing and why you're doing it. It's not mindless violence, it's. . . well, it's conscious violence. You're on an important mission, and the safety of the planet Earth is in your hands. Somehow, having good intentions makes it okay to be a trigger-happy maniac. (But not in real life, of course!)

The game's best feature is the transformation of the guardian from its humanoid shape to the jet fighter. It's a beautiful, smoothly animated sequence: The guardian spins around slowly, then faster as its insect-type battle armor shifts around, folding and stretching to take the form of a futuristic spacecraft with blue flame erupting from its tail.

Unfortunately, each best feature usually is accompanied by a worst feature, which in this case is Guardian Legend's password system for continuing your game. Don't get me wrong—I appreciate the fact that I don't have to play the whole game from the beginning each time I plug it in, but is it really necessary for the password to be 32 characters long, with a choice of over 60 characters to occupy each space?

The Guardian Legend is basically a rehash of two or three unoriginal game concepts. However, it's not easy to be subtle about incorporating multiple themes into a single game, and the results are pretty good. Try before you buy, if possible, because this one's not for all tastes—but with most new releases retailing in the \$40-\$60 range, that rule should apply to all games.

-Chris Bieniek

Broderbund Software, Inc., 17 Paul Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903-2101; (800) 521-6263.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break

For the Nintendo Entertoinment System (\$44.95)

The final seconds are ticking off the clock, the shot clock has nearly expired, the roar in

the stadium is deafening and your team is down by two points. After a quick cut to the right, back to the left, a pivot outside the three-point line, a jump—with a brief



instant of hang time before an effortless, graceful pump—the globe is unleashed in a perfect arc. The buzzer sounds, and the crowd's roar is suddenly

silenced as the fans realize that you have pulled off the upset of the century. Swish!

A perfect three-point play has unexpectedly shut down Magic Johnson's two-man army. It's just another victory for the armchair NES athlete playing Magic Johnson's Fast Break.

With the assistance of the NES Satellite adapter, up to four players compete in a friendly game of basketball, complete with an NBA referee. One player competes against the NES-controlled opponents while still playing two-on-two. The "B" button toggles selection of the current player controlled by the joystick. The "A" button is used to pass the ball inbounds, shoot for points, jump for rebounds and attempt to steal the ball from the opposing team.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break begins with some nice music and graphic effects, including a stun-

ning likeness of Magic Johnson himself. During game play Magic will appear after a particularly good shot and offer a nice compliment. An impressive effect at first, it tends to interrupt the flow of heated competition after a while.

From the first menu, a one- or two-player game is selected. Unfortunately, two players cannot team up against the computer-controlled team. In the four-player mode, each player controls one man on the court, which makes for some pretty rowdy competition.

In a one-player game, the computer's skill level, from "rookie" to "professional," is selected from the five available. The game is played in four quarters, each three minutes long. Between each quarter a detailed set of statistics is displayed for each team, such as shooting percentage, total free throws, total three-point plays, fouls and more. At the end of a game, the winning team may be awarded a bonus salary. The object is to beat the







Count on the Magic Man to give you a pat on the back when you are doing well in Tradewest's Magic Johnson's Fast Break.

WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME

1943. The battle fate history, It's no the free wor wings of your Particular wings of your particular with a machine with a ma

return to a hero's weicour favorfill attle at your favorfill favortware outlet.

call Cap 1665. It's your wings.



CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



Use all the firepower of your P-38 ogainst the famous enemy squadron.



Take down an enemy super bomber. Watch out for those gun turnets!

CAPCOM[®]

computer or human opponents, of course, and also to earn as much money as possible. Impressive players can add their initials to a high-score screen, though it's forgotten each time the NES is powered down.

The controls for Magic Johnson's Fast Break are logical and fairly easy to master. Confusing the pass and shoot buttons is almost always costly, however, and takes a bit of getting used to. The action is fast-paced, but always fun for multiple players. Contests against the computer are generally a foregone conclusion. Even in the easier levels, "Team Nintendo" almost always wins.

The game does imitate the basic mechanics of basketball. The referee is there, and he'll award foul shots when pertinent. The three-point play can be a real equalizer during the final seconds of a tight game. Scoring shots are not entirely "random," although that element is obviously present. Shot accuracy also seems to be based on the player's timing. Pressing the fire button initiates the jump for the shot, and releasing the button at just the right moment does seem to improve the shooting percentage. The computer's team seems to shoot a pretty solid 50% and seldom tries for a three-point play.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break does have some notable flaws, however. Every player always runs at exactly the same speed, whether he has the ball or not. Logically, you would expect the man dribbling the ball to run a bit more slowly, an element not simulated in this game. So, after a turnover, the player must prepare early and always stay a few steps in front of the opponent. Once a half step behind, a player can not catch up until the opponent pulls up for a shot

On defense, the fire button is used to attempt a steal or to jump for a rebound. The attempt to jump and block a shot doesn't appear in this simulation, a major flaw. When the opponent is ready to shoot, pressing the fire button still attempts a steal move instead of a "jump to block." A jump response to the fire button seems to occur only when the basketball is rebounding from the rim or backboard.

The players have no personalities of their own. Each player seems to have the same skills, with no variation in play. Other popular basketball simulations simulate a particular player's preference (and increased probability for scoring) for the outside shot or a drive down the lane, for example. This lack

In Vic Tokai's Clash at Demonhead, you take the role of Sgt. Billy Blitz and try to traverse the roads that lead up Demonhead mountain.





of depth makes playing against the computer a pretty uninteresting struggle. Playing against human friends depends on genuine skill more than the computer; although, even here, the player not currently under joystick control is manipulated by the computer. A rousing game of one-on-one, with no second player on each team, would have been a nice play option for this game.

Magic Johnson's Fast Break sports superior graphics, good sound effects and excellent, smooth animation of the players and the basketball. The player movements are fluid and natural looking. The mechanics of game play are simulated nicely, but it does lack some depth. It is best suited as a multi-player game, using the player vs. computer scenario primarily as a rote drill practice for your next big tournament against a friend.

---Matthew J. W. Ratcliff

Tradewest, P. O. Box 1796, 2400 South Highway 75, Corsicana, TX 75110; (214) 874-2683.

Clash at Demonhead

System (\$44.50)

For the Nintendo Entertainment

RATINGS : Sound/Music 5 Graphics 6 Playability 6 Overall 6

I guess that the life of a debonair swashbuckler is never easy. One minute you're lounging on the beach, a cool, salty breeze in

your hair, the next you're on your way to save the planet. Welcome to the world of Sgt. Billy "Big Bang" Blitz, the hero of Vic Tokai's new game Clash at Demonhead.

The action gets off to an eerie start with a call from your superiors. It seems that world-famous Professor Plum is missing, along with the plans for his top-secret doomsday device. If it falls into the wrong hands, the very future of the free world will be in jeopardy. You must suit up and take on the nefarious lawbreakers, penetrate their stronghold and rush to the summit of Demonhead Mountain to free the poor professor. Yes, it's an awfully busy agenda for anyone, superhero or not.

Clash is a combination adventure/strategy/shoot-'em-up game that takes you on a wild ride. As Sgt. Blitz, you must make your way past a myriad of enemies and bosses to get to the objective at

(continued on page 44)

The response to Pipe Dream™ has been admirably restrained.



Fortunately, it's not necessary to physically restrain everyone who

contracts Pipe Dream fever. But frankly, we're surprised that the Surgeon General hasn't ordered us to put a warning on the box.

Pipe Dream is Lucasfilm's fast-flowing new computer game of skill, strategy, and plumbing. And while the devilishly simple concept makes Pipe Dream easy to learn, it's maddeningly tough to master.

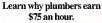
Imagine playing chess in the middle of a pie fight.

Pipe Dream's objective is simple enough: Just piece together a pipeline from plumbing parts

that appear on the side of the screen. But after eight seconds, the flood gates

open. The plot thickens. And quickens.

Suddenly, you're scrambling to lay pipe ahead of the flow. You've got to think strategically. But act instinctively. One wrong move, brief hesitation, or misplaced pipe part and you're sunk in a sea of soggy sewage!



Of course the better you get, the faster the flow. And the 36 levels get protrickier, with special bonus

gressively trickier, with special bonus tubes worth extra points. Reservoir sections that slow the flow of sludge. Unexpected obstacles appear. So do mandatory finishing points. And other trials to drive the deftest pipelayer daffy.

Choose a *Pipe Dream* play mode to suit your skill: basic, expert, or two-plumber challenge. And when no one's looking, use the training mode to glimpse advanced level screens that you might otherwise never see.

Test your plumbing skills before you buy.

For a sample version of *Pipe Dream* look on specially marked boxes of Kao diskettes, or send \$200 for postage and handling to: Pipe Dream Offer, Kao Infosystems Company, 41444 Christy St., Fremont, CA 94538. State diskette size (3½" or 5½") and system type (PC or Macintosh only).

Once you've contracted Pipe Dream fever, move up to the full-blown version and really test your pipe-fitting prowess. If you're lucky, the only thing they'll have to restrain will be your enthusiasm.

UCASFIL N



ivalidation of IBM*(family * Macinitarix* Ampaintains 1." and Commodore 84" personal computers. Order direct by calling 1 600 SIARWARS (1 600 782-7927)
DRSB Losalish III. All rights received. Location Life Orders and Fige Destination Location Life Order is a facilitation of the International Business
Additions. In: Third yet all receivers of Location Life Orders and Location Life Orders and a rational receiver of Location Life Orders and Location Location Location Life Orders and Location Life Order

Two plumbers can play this

The better you get, the trickier it gets. But one false move,



Sudden Death.

If you thought soccer was a game for the rest of the world, here's America's answer. A fanatical crowd, a full team of 11, and action so precise, so powerful, so *awesome*, you can almost taste it. Win or lose, one thing's certain: GOAL!™ will win you over.

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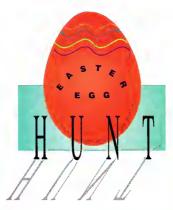


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Tips ere greded on a scela of ona to five iovsticks.

Heve you found any interesting gems buried in the games you pley? If so, you can meke some cesh by sending them to us. Just put them on e piece of peper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The euthor of eech new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neetly, end be sure to includa your name end address!

Here's e kay to tha abbrevietions: U = Up D = Down L = Left R = Right A = "A" button B = "B" button



RAMBO

(Acclaim for the NES)
4 Joysticks

The programmers of this war epic have left a neat little egg that gives you unlimited energy. Enter this password:

H 8 0 0 1 b W 2 k G 4 Q K w K c

66WH QbW2 0F1D G19D

Though nothing will appear to be any different from a normal game, when Rambo's energy meter gets down to zero,

he'll stil<mark>l be</mark> alive and well.







Othello

(Acclaim for the NES)
I joystick
Did you know there is a
secret slot mode in this
game? Well, if you start
up a game using
SELECT and START,
the mode will be
displayed as "slot."



Play through the game normally, but when it prompts you to hit START to count the final number of chips, hit SELECT and A. A strange display will appear, and you'll have a chance to get some extra chips on your side.

DRAGO

Advanced Dungeons Tragons



Tanis confronts a troll before the throne in the Hall of Ancients.



Traveling through the wilderness, Sturm encounters a Draconian.



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Set in the legendary DRAGONLANCE® game world, DRAGONS OF FLAME explodes with red-hot action. You control up to ten Companions, one at a time Your quest: rescue slaves held by the rayaging Dragonarmies in the foul fortress of Pax Tharkas.

Your wits and reflexes better be sharp. In this game, you're either quick...or you're dead

Each Companion possesses specialized skills. Use these skills to evade evil Draconian patrols. Keep one step ahead of the Dragonarmies while battling scores of deadly monsters.

All the terrors of the journey, however, pale in comparison to the horror of your destination. The fortress of Pax Tharkas looms before you, crackling with vile energy.

CAN YOU STAND THE HEAT? Can you stand the heat?

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.

Rampage

(Sega for the SMS)
3 Joysticks

Steve Pestana of Coral

Springs, Florida, has informed us
of a way to continue this mutant
battle. In two-player mode, after
you shrink down to your human
form, all you have to do is press
button No. 2 to bring your
monster back to life. Thanks,
Steve!





Bomber Man

(Hudson Soft for the NES)
4 joysticks
Bryan Datn of
Daly City,
California, has
informed us of a
way to get
invincibility from
your own bombs in





Ring King

(Data East for the NES) 3 joysticks

The tip team of Aaran Field and Braok Froncisco from Son Francisca. Collifornia, have given us an invalved hint for receiving unlimited stomina, but it takes two contrailers to accamplish. In the training gym, da the fallawing sequence:

On contrailer No. 2—A;

cantraller Na. 1—A, SELECT, then A; cantraller Na. 2—B; cantraller Na. 1—SELECT; cantraller Na. 2—A and B stmuttaneausly; cantraller Na. 1—B twice, Great jab, guysl



STACE 30

game. The hardest part of this egg is that you have to get to Stage 30, but once there, there is a special icon that will appear (as shown above). Pick it up and if you hold down A, you'll be able to stand by while the bombs blow up everything around you! Way to go, Bryan.

D O U B L E D R A G O N

(TRADEWEST FOR THE NES AND SEGA FOR THE SMS)
2 JOYSTICKS

WHEN A CHARACTER COMES OUT HOLDING A STICK OF DYNAMITE, YOU CAN MAKE HIM BLOW HIMSELF UP INSTEAD OF YOU. MIKE STRANE OF PENN HILLS, PENNSYLVANIA, SAYS TO STAND ON THE SAME VERTICAL LINE AS THE CHARACTER AND START WALKING BACKWARD WHEN THE BAD GUY TOSSES THE DYNAMITE. IF ALL GOES CORRECTLY, YOUR OPPONENT WILL STROLL TOWARD YOU—RIGHT INTO THE EXPLOSION. GOOD STRATEGY, MIKE.



GO HEAD-TO-HEAD, WIRELESS!

With The Nintendo Double Player Wireless Head-To-Head System From Acclaim.



Playing games on the Nintendo Entertainment System* will never be the same with Acclaim's new DOUBLE PLAYER™ System—the two player set of wireless controllers that really gives you and a friend the power to move when playing your favorite video games—especially games with head-to-head, 2-player action!

Officially approved by Nintendo,* the DOUBLE PLAYER™ System scores BIG with score-raising features like twin turbo rapid-fire, slow-motion, and pin-point accuracy from up to 30' away. Get the winning edge.

THE HEAD-TO-HEAD WIRELESS winning edge!







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KNIGHT RIDER

MISSION: Retrieve top secret weaponry stolen by terrorists.

VEHICLE: KITT, the Knight 2000 supercar.

WEAPONS: High-impact missiles, Machine guns, Reflex

SPECIAL FEATURES: Continue mode, Protective shields, Turbo boosters.



The Ultimate Driving Game!



ON THE GROUND AND IN THE AIR.. ACCLAIM'S GOT THE ACTION!



MISSION: Rescue American prisoners.

VEHICLE: Airwolf,

the Mach 1 jetcopter. WEAPONS: 33 mm

Machine guns and Copperhead missiles.



SPECIAL FEATURES: Fully functional cockpit, On board computer.

Command the State-of-the-Art Flying Weapon!







The International Chartbuster Is Now Playing On NES !

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(Nintendo)
Seal of Quality

Licensed by Nintendo for play on the Nintendo
ENTERTRIPMENT



CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD.





(continued from page 32)

Demonhead and free the aforementioned Prof. Armed with only a machine gun at first, you're given the opportunity to upgrade your weaponry by buying additional items. Funds are increased after you blast certain enemies, who turn into dollar signs for you to collect.

Moving throughout the screens of Clash, you must best a variety of terrains, including gorges, flatlands, peaks and the deep jungle. As you might expect in a search game of this type, Clash provides you with plenty of opportunities to rack up points by blasting the minions of the lawbreakers, such as robot drones, leaping, toothlike creatures and, my personal favorite, little cruise missiles that follow you around until they pop you (or vice versa).

At various junctures throughout your quest, you will be presented with opportunities to take various routes to the top of Demonhead. A map will appear periodically to help you find the best route to the final battle. If you don't accumulate a large amount of cash, you'll have hard surviving-money is paramount for replenishing lives and upgrading gear.

Now a word about our hero, Sgt. Blitz. As the head of the Special Assault Brigade For Real Emergencies (S.A.B.R.E.), you'd expect him to be a big, burly-looking guy packing a flak jacket, sporting a crewcut, scowling all the way up the mountain, But Sqt. Bang doesn't quite live up to his name, I'm afraid. With his quick, bouncy steps and mop-top hair, Sqt. Blitz looks like a refugee from a Partridge family reunion. Granted, the tone of this game is lighthearted, but I guess I expect more out of guys named Blitz.

All things considered, Clash at Demonhead is an enjoyable game, full of colorful characters and fast-paced action. Game play requires a great deal of precision, and the graphics and sound support the storyline very well. Be prepared to spend some time behind the controller pad, however. Clash is more than willing to throw large numbers of adversaries and pitfalls your way. Keep a cool head about you and blast away. This is a game of varied adventures to keep you coming back for more, provided Sgt. Blitz doesn't have another more pressing mission.

—Patrick J. Kelley

Vic Tokai, 22904 Lockness Ave. Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 326-8880.

Bad Dudes

DATA EAST

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.95)

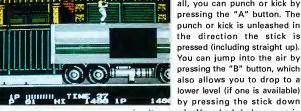


Bad Dudes is the tale of, well, two bad dudes named Blade and Striker. They are experts in hand-to-hand combat, and their mission is to

rescue the President, who has been kidnapped by ninjas. Your mission is to battle the henchmen of the Dragon Ninia as you proceed through seven scenes to the final battle and subsequent rescue of the President.

The first screen lets you choose whether you want to be Blade or Striker. There doesn't seem to be any difference between them, so you don't have to waste a lot of time choosing. If you select a twoplayer game, you must take turns-you can't have both bad dudes on the screen at the same time. The action starts when

> you enter the first scene, called "the city." Control of your dude is simple. First of all, you can punch or kick by pressing the "A" button. The punch or kick is unleashed in the direction the stick is pressed (including straight up). You can jump into the air by pressing the "B" button, which also allows you to drop to a lower level (if one is available)



The President

has been kid-

napped by the

nasty Dragon

Ninja, and it's

time to call in

Bad Dudes to

save him.



simultaneously. Your bad dude moves in the direction you press the stick or control pad and can also duck.

The enemies are numerous and varied, although they are all variations on a ninja theme. The blue ninias appear the most often, and they can be dispatched with a single hit. White ninjas are tougher. They require two hits and throw knives. Other enemies include a lady ninja, red ninja (uses a sword), samurai (nasty with a stick) and other assorted creatures, including rabid dogs. As per usual, at the end of each scene, a super warrior appears who can take a lot of punishment and usually has some special weapon that makes your job tougher. For example, the super warrior at the end of the city breathes fire but can be defeated by simply slugging him a few times, jumping to a different level while he breathes fire and repeatSomething Deadly in the Air.

he Stealth Advanced Tactical Fighter. America's most guarded military secret. And now you're in the cockpit, ready to unleash the explosive power of the F-117A on rival forces around the world. The mystery is over. And the enemy is toast.

The Best Flying Game Ever for the NES.

- Full F-117A aerodynamics. Barrel rolls, 360 degree loops, nose-bleed dives, and screaming banks.
- Awesome 2-player dogfights.
- "Stealth mode" makes you invisible to enemy radar.
- Over 100 deadly missions around the globe.



be shining shoes for the general.



your local retailer or call 800-2<mark>27-69</mark>00 to order.



Your stomack just made an illegal U-turn after that last 6g roll. Kick into "stealth mode" and blast that bogey squadron into scrap metal.



ing this cycle until he keels over. Other warriors are tougher, though.

You have three lives and lose one each time you get hit ten times. A "hit" can be from an opponent or from the environment. For example, in the third level, falling into the sewer water diminishes you (as you can probably imagine). A game can be continued three times, then it's over, but you can replenish your life force (so you can take a full ten hits again) by picking up the energy canisters dropped by certain opponents. You can also pick up weapons such as nunchaku or a knife when opponents drop them, which makes you a more powerful warrior. Also, each level must be completed in a certain length of time, but this period can be increased by picking up clocks. Picking up objects is a little difficult in the heat of battle, since you must kneel down and press the "A" button.

Each scene presents additional challenges. The city is pretty straightforward, but by Scene 2 (the big rig), you must jump from one trailer to another without falling to the roadway, since that costs you hit points. When you get to the forest (Scene 4), you must be agile enough to walk along the tops of tall hedges, since rabid dogs pursue you across the forest floor. The adventure continues through the freight train (don't misstep when jumping from car to car); the cave, which leads into the Dragon Ninja's fortress (heavily guarded and loaded with loose stalactites); and, finally, into the factory, where you must deal not only with multiple super warriors, but leap aboard the Dragon Ninja's helicopter and do battle with the main man himself.

Data East's ads for Bad Dudes proclaim the high quality of the graphics, and the backgrounds are very nice—high resolution with lots of color and realistic scrolling. However, the animation is jumpy for all the characters, and whenever more than a couple of enemies appear, they all start to flicker distractingly. Because of the flicker it's sometimes hard to tell how many enemies are attacking you.

Bad Dudes is not especially different from other Karate adventures, including Double Dragon. The figures are larger, and the background graphics are of higher quality, but the play action is pretty simple. There are none of the fun touches of Double Dragon, such as picking up an oil can and bowling over your opponents with it or whipping them into submission (well, maybe I'm a little twisted). If you already own one of these games, Bad Dudes doesn't offer much that is new, but if you are still looking to add one to your collection, check it out.

—David Plotkin

Data East, 1850 Little Orchard Street, San Jose, CA 95125; (408) 286-7080.

Sky Shark TAITO Nintendo Entert

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$44.99)



Sky Shark is a scrolling shoot-'em-up that combines furious action with good graphics to provide an exciting, if not especially

original, gaming experience. In it, you are in control of a single-engine fighter equipped with two types of weapons. First of all, you have multi-firing machine guns mounted on both wings, activated by the "A" button. These have unlimited ammunition but are only totally effective against other small aircraft and tanks. You can power-up the guns by blasting an entire wave of red enemy planes, which leaves behind a gun token you can fly over to double your fire power.

The other weapons are your bombs, activated with the "B" button. A bomb is a much more effective weapon than the machine gun, clearing a fairly large area of most obstacles on both the ground and in the air. Your plane starts out with three bombs, but it can acquire more by blasting certain targets and flying over the bomb token that appears. Bombs should definitely be saved because there are some large targets that can only be taken out with them.

The scrolling landscape is gorgeous, with buildings, beaches, jungles and mountains visible below your plane. The enemy vehicles include tanks, planes, ships and some sort of gun platform that sails along on the water. Virtually all of these shoot at you, and most can be destroyed with a single hit from your guns. Some, however, need multiple hits, and others can only be destroyed by several bomb hits. A huge tank as well as a large airplane show up from time to time. You had better have some bombs left when they appear, or be prepared to do some fancy flying to avoid the volleys of shots that pour out of these awesome craft. Bombs can also be useful when a large number of enemies appear all at one time, and you need to clear a flight lane. One handy trait of the bomb is that it defuses all shots that are in the air, so launching a bomb can be a last desperate measure if you are about to be hit. A single hit destroys your plane, costing you one of your four lives and any power-ups you may have (including any extra bombs).





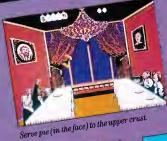
Take to the sky in your tough fighter plane and conquer the enemy in Taito's Sky Shark.

Painfully Funny.



et ready for punching, slapping, poking, pie-inthe-face fun with Moe, Larry, and Curly. Join these legendary loonies as they turn your NES into a classic Stooges movie, with you as the star!

- Ten games-within-a-game, including Stooges trivia.
- The best graphics and sound ever for your NES. Hear the Stooges' actual voices!
 - Nyuk! Nyuk! Relive a scene from your favorite Stooges movie.





Go crackers with Curly as he battles nasty oysters in his chowder.



Can this zany trio save the orphanage from the clutches of an evil banker? Why soy-ten-ly!

See your local retailer or call 1-800-227-6900 to order.



CIRCLE #123 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

As you can imagine, Sky Shark gets progressively harder, and it isn't just that there are more enemies that shoot faster. Huge battleships and aircraft carriers show up, and each gun emplacement on a ship requires multiple hits to destroy. It is more than a little helpful to have access to powered-up machine guns or have a good store of bombs at this point. Also, the enemy begins to take advantage of cover-tanks emerge from under rocks and hide in the dense foliage of the jungle. Clever, they are.

Sky Shark is split into levels, and your plane lands at an airfield between each one. You get a complete restock of bombs when you land, which is very helpful. There is, unfortunately, no game-save or password feature, although you may continue from where you lost your last life. In what I consider to be a terrible design decision, you must press the START button to continue after losing your last life-pressing the "A" button (which you do to continue after losing a plane) ends the game! I don't know how many times I have meant to continue and accidently ended the game instead. Wanna know how far you can throw an NES cartridge? I can tell you.

Sky Shark has so many similarities to other scrolling shoot-'em-ups, especially Capcom's 1943, that if you own one you will not find much new or different. But if you don't, this cartridge is challenging and fun-and just a bit frustrating.

–David Plotkin

Taito, 267 West Esplanade, Suite 206, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1A5; (604) 984-3344.

Rescue

KEMCO/SEIKA For the Nintendo Entertoinment System (\$39.95)



It's a familiar turn of events: Terrorists have seized vet another embassy and are holding hostages. Demands are made and deadlines are

set. Innocent lives hang in the balance as leaders decide on a desperate course of action. It's up to you to raid the captured embassy, knock out resistance, neutralize terrorists and free the staff. Kemco/Seika has taken this page directly from the evening news with their new title, Rescue, a



challenging game.

Actually, having ing two separate games on one car-

tridge. In the first segment of the game, you must maneuver your three-man sniper team into position around the embassy compound. Selecting your sniper from an overhead map, you must move him through the embassy grounds and into his predetermined "kill" zone. The action begins as you weave your way toward the target, constantly avoiding probing searchlights. Anyone unlucky enough to be pinned by the roving beam will be cut down by off-screen terrorists. You must constantly be on the move-rolling, ducking behind walls and crouching in doorways are the only ways to avoid the searchlights and keep the target alive.

Once you have your snipers in position, the action shifts to a view through their telescopic gunsights. Your next job is to sweep the lit windows of the embassy with the scope and cut down any terrorists lurking in the windows with rifle fire. The little silhouettes representing the terrorists moving behind the window shades is a nice touch. A shot through a window will reward you with a gaping hole and the crash of breaking glass.

The second phase of play begins when a four-man squad is dropped to the roof of the embassy by helicopter. You then control

them on their way in. After selecting a team member, you must rappel him down the side of the building and swing him into position through one of the shot-out windows This is a part of the game that requires patience and skill to master. The control for activating the rappel feature is very sensitive, and on the first few tries I had trouble

mastering it (quite often my character propelled himself off into space, instead of through the window).

Once inside, you must search the various floors of the embassy for your hostages. A small map in the lower corner of the screen

> will aid you by showing your position, a floor plan and the position of

the terrorists. As you make your way down the hallways, the point of view is over your shoulder and down the barrel of your

. .

Terrorists have taken over the embassy and many lives hang in the balance. Can you Rescue them?





Graphics That Will Kill You.



CAUTION: FOUR MEGA POWER.

Not double, not triple, but four times the playing power of a regular cartridge. You get the hottest space combat, the baddest explosions, and the coolest sounds ever!



Gut check time inside the enemy Death Tunnel. You're now as close to victory as you are to your last breath.



Rush hour traffic in the Junos Galaxy. Don't honk, just shoot.



The friendly folks on the Fire Planet love a barbecue. You're on tonight's menu as a Galactic Grilled Special.

See your local retailer or call 1-800-227-6900 to order.



machine gun. All the terrorists you encounter must be shot as you sweep the embassy, but be on your guard—too quick on the trigger finger and you'll wind up shooting a hostage instead. The operation ends when all of the terrorists are killed and the hostages freed. Your abilities are assessed when the level where you are told how you fared, your casualty list, etc., ends.

Rescue moves along at breakneck speed as you race against an on-screen timer to fulfill your mission. There are three levels of difficulty and five separate missions ranging from the entry level (training) to the mission code-named Jupiter. Rescue keeps you on the edge of your seat all the way through, aided by great graphics and a catchy musical score. Game play is challenging even for experienced gamers and should keep this game from ending up on the "played it once, played it a thousand times" list.

So, for all you aspiring Delta Force leaders, Kemco/Seika's is just the ticket.

-Patrick J. Kelley

Kemco/Seika, 20000 Mariner Avenue, Suite 100, Torrance, CA 90501; (213) 373-0404.

Ghouls 'N' Ghosts

For the Sega Genesis (\$44.95)

RATINGS
Sound/Music 10
Graphics 9
Playability 10
Overall 9

It didn't take long for Sega to produce a game worthy of the power of their new Genesis system. Ghouls 'N' Ghosts is a faithful replication of the

arcade game upon which it's based. The graphics are extraordinary, the music is delightfully atmospheric and the game play is tough and addictive.

You, the player, control the actions of Sir Arthur on a mission to rescue your regal girl-friend from the clutches of the evil Prince of Darkness. He's taken her captive and terrorized the countryside with his hideous creatures: Angels of Death, gigantic skull-spitting plants, tentacles that beckon you from underground, birds of prey and dozens of others. Unfortunately, your defenses are thin: a coat of armor and a single weapon. One successful attack from an enemy and you lose your armor, leaving you to roam the countryside in your underwear—an odd sight, to be sure. One more attack and

you're just another pile of adventurer's bones.



Scattered along the way are treasure chests, some contain-

ing demons and some holding armor or weapons. Should you find one with armor when you're already fully suited, you'll gain magical powers of exceptional effectiveness. Using magic requires a three-second power-up period each time, so you can't always use magic when dodging a tight situation.

There are six types of weapons, each with its own magic. The weapons—swords, axes, fire water, discuses and daggers—have different properties and are useful for various situations. Some must be used in close quarters, and some can be thrown short or long distances. At the end of each of the levels is a "boss monster," and usually there's one or two

weapons that are most effective at destroying him. In fact, some of them can only be dispatched with a certain weapon. Deducing which weapon is needed is strictly trial-and-error.

The graphics in Ghouls 'N' Ghosts are extraordinary. The backgrounds move at a different



Beautiful

graphics and

fantastic sound

highlight Ghouls

'N' Ghosts, a

high-quality

arcade transla-

the

tion for

Sega Genesis.



rate than the foregrounds, giving a 3-D appearance that the Genesis is noted for. The game scrolls sideways, vertically, diagonally, up and down and ways you've never seen before.

Each level features more sophisticated graphics than the last, with a near-photographic quality at times. But it's the dozens of minor details that really make the game special: attacking characters peek around the tall grass before approaching, feathers fly when the vultures are killed, trees sway, leaves spiral though the wind, thunderstorms and earthquakes rock the scenery and more. All of this is accompanied by a series of intense and catchy musical scores, funky yet sinister, vaguely reminiscent of Lurch's harpsichord from The Addams Family. The sound effects are also outstanding, especially the metallic clank of the bloodthirsty guillotines that pepper the first level.



Will they call you "Tinkerbell" or "Deadeye"?





Take on the best pilots in oneon-one dogfights at the Naval Fighter Weapons School to find out who is the real top gun.



You don't know what a good chewing out is until you've ticked off Admiral Hawk. Wipe that smirk off your face, Lieutenant.

Find out, on the toughest fighter training ground in the world. In F-14 TOMCAT. Master the fine points of aerial combat. Move up the ranks in your tours of duty aboard the carrier U.S.S. Nimitz. And test your dogfighting skills against the most elite pilots in the world.

F-14 TOMCAT features 80 randomly assigned missions in five theaters. 1st-person in-the-cockpit realism. And feel-it-in-your-gut aerial maneuvers. It's the best-selling combat flight simulator on the Commodore today.

Think you're a "Top Gun"? Then prove it, hot-shot, in F-14 TOMCAT.

"F-14 TOMCAT is one of the best combat flight simulators for the 64. Graphics, sound, and action are excellent, and the framework of a career scenario adds a sense of realism and purpose."

— Compute's Gazette

"F-14 gives you a shot at being one of America's most elite fighter pilots."

— Computer Gaming World

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With the various options available in the option screen, you can sample all of the musical licks and sound effects. Despite the misleading "1 Player" notation on the back of the box, the game has a two-player mode as well (which can be played with only one controller, if you wish). The nicest feature is the presence of two modes, practice and professional. In professional mode, there are more villains

and they are quite a bit tougher than

in practice mode. In either mode, you have unlimited continues that let you pick up the game close (to the nearest half a level) to where you left off.

All in all, Ghouls 'N' Ghosts is the most addictive and absorbing release for the Genesis to date. Even fans of the arcade version will be forced to admit that this is a nearperfect reproduction. It's one of the few totally satisfying video games I've had the pleasure to play.

—Joshua Mandel

Sega of America, 573 Forbes Boulevard, South San Francisco, CA 94080; (800) USA-SEGA.

The Magic of Scheherazade

CULTURE BRAIN
For the Nintendo Entertoinment
System (\$49.99)



Simply put, Sabaron is a bad magician and you are a good one. The problem is that you can't remember anything, and you don't know how to find Sabaron.

To make things worse still, Sabaron has kidnapped your girlfriend, Scheherazade, her sisters and her father, the king. In order to save the king and his daughters, you'll have to travel through five worlds and several time zones, learn magic, enlist the help of a small group of allies and learn the use of swords, magic wands and various spells.

The Magic of Scheherazade is a role-playing game, which means basically that you play the main character and that he starts out weak and practically defenseless and gets stronger as you successfully play the game. There are also lots of puzzles in this game, but none of them are extremely hard to solve.







Culture Brain's Magic of Scheherazade hands you the magic wand to save your girlfriend from the clutches of Sabaron. This Arabian adventure spans various towns, forests, lakes, swamps and other natural locations. In the towns, you can talk to the natives to discover clues, visit the shops to buy important items, rest in hotels (to recover your strength) and visit mosques for various purposes (such as resurrecting a dead ally, finding the latest password in case you need to restart the game later or changing your character's class to fighter, saint or magician). You will have to play as each of these character classes at least once during the course of the game. The towns also house special characters and other surprises.

Outside the towns, life is not so easy. Everywhere you go you'll encounter enemies. At first, these enemies are difficult to beat, but you can obtain money and experience points. Later in the game, these outside characters can be a nuisance, so you'll learn a spell that keeps them away.

As role-playing games go, The Magic of Scheherazade is pretty easy. However, it should be fun for beginning and intermediate role players. Experienced players may whip through this game in record time, but there are still enough plot twists and interesting challenges to make the game fun to play. For instance, you can reap a great harvest if you plant a Rupia seed in the past during the Alalart Solar Eclipse (a regularly occurring event in this world), then travel to the future and check out the result.

This game basically occurs in five acts—the water world, the desert world, the winter world, the flower world and the final challenge. Each world has some subtle differences, though the action is basically the same from one level to the next.

Typically, you'll spend some time exploring the countryside, occasionally casting the Oprin spell to reveal hidden doors. You'll use your sword or the magic rod to fight enemies, and you'll make frequent visits to towns to gather information, enlist help or stock up on supplies. Less frequently, you'll explore dungeons or palaces where you'll encounter still more potent enemies. Ultimately, on each level you'll

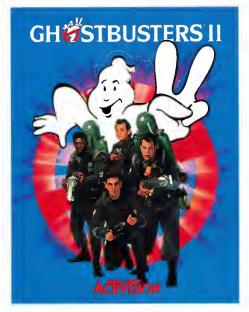


have to meet and defeat a boss character—one of Sabaron's min-

ions. In most cases an all-out, no-holdsbarred approach works best.

In some ways, this game may remind you of *The Legend of Zelda*, but it has its own (continued on page 156)

Bustin' Makes You Feel Good!



Who ya gonna call? The Ghostbusters—again. Clear the courtroom of ghouls and get back in business. Bust your pals out of the insane asylum. Trap ghosts around New York City, then turn the slime to your side and march the Statue of Liberty across town to the Museum. If you've got the slimeblower, wasting the evil Vigo should be easy.



Get Ready to Believe Them.



Launch Miss Liberty on a



You Can Take It With You!



Revenge in Gator ..

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The game that took over 2500 years to develop—
and at least that long to master! A seemingly
endless number of variations of the playing
board, each with five increasingly difficult
stages to unravel. Play the original version, using Mah Jongg tiles, or the updated
version using the alphabet. We can teach
you bow to play the game, strategies, even
bow to read the Chinese characters—the
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LO There's no macho warrior armed with the latest destructive technology in this game—only our valiant little Lolo, taking on all challenges armed only with ingenuity and patience. A game for adults as well as children, The Adventures of Lolo contains fifty different mazes of increasing difficulty that must be defeated, not by force, but by wise use of the tools at hand. This is the game we play when the boss isn't around!

ROLLERBALLO The classic pinball game of the '50s, updated with the technology of the '80s—you've never seem a pinball game like ROLLERBALL. Two game options, the four-screen scrolling excitement of Skyscraper and the one-on-one competition of Matchplay, bring a brand new challenge for old bands and novices alike. At last, a video game that gives Dad a chance to win! And, ROLLERBALL won't tit!



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Nintend





CYBERSPACE?

by Maurice Malyneaux

turned the racket in my hand, then took a few experimental swings with it. A mament later, I saw the ball. I raised the racket and took a swing. Whack! I hit the ball. It hit the far wall and came back toward me. Whack! As it baunced aff the wall again, a disembodied vaice an my right distracted my attention. I looked that way, but saw no ane there. The forgotten ball went past my right eor, and I turned araund to watch it ricachet aff the bock wall af the rocquetboll caurt.

Sameane I cauldn't see taak my racket, and I reoched up and pulled aff my goggles. Suddenly, I was na langer in the racquetball caurt, but standing in a dimly lift affice with equipment lining the walls and about half a dazen people standing around. I had stepped back into narmal reality after a taste of "virtual reality," a medium knawn as Cyberspace.

Currently, when you play a video game ar da work an a camputer, you view everything through the "windaw" of your TV set ar manitor. In Cyberspace you actually seem to be inside the camputer simulation. You stand in it just as you da in the real warld. If you turn your head to the right, you see what's to your right. You can turn around, tilt your head, do anything you can da in the real warld. except that in Cyberspace, everything laoks like camputer graphics!



Cyberspace is a project currently under development at Autodesk Inc., one of the largest computer-software publishers in the country. The project is aimed at creating a system whereby users can enter a virtual reality and thus do things with computers that were previously impossible. For example, Autodesk's main software product is AutoCad, the de facto standard in CAD (computer-assisted design). An architect who designs a building with AutoCad could then use Cyberspace to actually "tour" the building. He or she could "walk" through it, seeing it as if the building were real! Prospective homeowners could take a walk through their as-vet-unbuilt house, arranging furniture and fixtures long before any real foundations are poured!

The potential uses for Cyberspace go far beyond architectural visualizations and into the realms of training, social interactivity and entertainment. The Cyberspace team has already programmed the aforementioned racquetball game—complete with adjustable gravity. Imagine a racing-type game played in this manner. You can turn and look around the car through various windows and see the landscape screaming by from any view you want! No more just looking straight ahead into a screen.

To enter Cyberspace requires that you don a pair of goggles known as "Eye-Phones." These Eye-Phones, manufactured by VPL Research of Redwood City, California, contain two video displays, each showing a distinct image for each

eye. This left- and right-eye separation creates a real sense of depth, so you can instinctively tell how close or far away an object is. The headgear supporting the goggles contains special equipment that can be tracked by a sensor in the room that can determine where your head is and in what direction you are looking. This information is sent to the computer, which draws appropriate graphics, allowing you to see this computer-simulated world in the same way you look at the real

The *Cyberspace* team has already programmed a racquetball game complete with adjustable gravity.

world. If you turn around 360 degrees, you'll see your *Cyberspace* surroundings in the same way.

The sensors can also detect other appropriately equipped items, such as the previously mentioned racket. When playing racquetball in *Cyberspace*, you swing the real racket in the air and see a computer-generated racket doing the same, via the goggles. If you roll the racket in your hand, the *Cyberspace* racket does likewise. The racket in virtual reality moves

exactly like the real racket, allowing you to play a very realistic game of racquetall—even in a crowded office. (Just be careful not to get carried away and hit anyone!) There's no real court nor even a real ball. The only "real" elements in the game are you and the racket. The computer creates all other elements in this virtual reality.

What's Working So Far

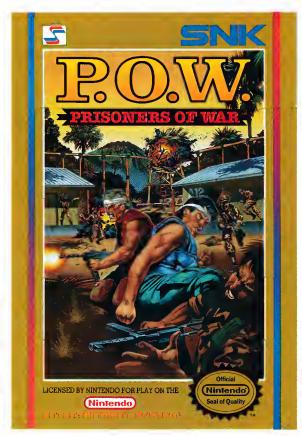
Although full-blown *Cyberspace* systems and applications probably won't hit the market for at least a few years, the potential hinted at by the groundwork set today is staggering. The development team had a number of test *Cyberspace* programs working at the time I visited their offices. The first was the racquetball game, the second was a demonstration of how you can manipulate and move around in your virtual environment and the third was a bicycling simulation called "Hicycle."

The racquetball game is pretty simple. The user simply swings the racket into the path of the ball and hopes to connect. Running after the ball is not recommended, because while the player seems to have plenty of room in Cyberspace, he is probably standing in a much smaller room. With the goggles on, you can't see the real environment.

The second demonstration allows you to safely move around Cyberspace without any risk of breaking your neck. You put on a special sensor-equipped glove, and when you enter Cyberspace, you see a floating hand in space, in front of you. If you

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turn or move your gloved hand, your "virtual" hand will do likewise. To move in any given direction, you merely have to point that way. The neat thing about this particular demonstration is that you can actually manipulate objects in the virtual reality. For example, if you move your virtual hand to one of the books in the "office," you can pick up the book simply by making a fist. Then carry the book around with you, drop it wherever you please or even throw it!

A "portal" appears in the office; moving into it transports you to a space containing a beach umbrella and a swimming pool. You can move into the pool. Once under the virtual water, everything looks blue. If you carried an object in from the office, you can let it go while underwater and watch it zip up to the surface of the water, where it will float!

Then there's Hicycle: a prime example of how *Cyberspace* can be used to liven up what might ordinarily be a dull pastime. Hicycle mounts a standard bicycle on a as Cyberspace "engines." The Autodesk Cyberspace system currently runs on 25-and 33-megahertz 32-bit 80386 PCs, one of the fastest and most powerful personal computer systems on the market, using hardware coprocessors to render the images (one coprocessor for each eye).

Rather than drawing a single screen, a Cyberspace system has to draw two at a time, one for each eye. It also has to draw the images as changing 3-D representations, taking into account the position of the user and the angle of his or her point of view. This puts great demands on even the best hardware, although as the software becomes more refined, it will probably become possible to implement Cyberspace on less powerful computers. Still, not every piece of computing hardware will be up to the challenge, so don't expect to see a Cyberspace system on your Nintendo anytime soon.

There are plans, however, to eventually port the *Cyberspace* system to as many machines as possible: Macintoshes, Ami-

tion amongst the hardware people. The 3-D engine people especially are falling over themselves to create faster engines for this. And the helmet people, . .we've talked to three different groups now that want to make lightweight, stylish headgear. A couple of interesting technologies [for the headgear] are fiber optics to pipe the images up to the eyes and holographic lenses." With both or either of those, says Walser, Cyberspace "should have very lightweight lenses." The current Eye-Phones use Sony color-LCD (liquid crystal display) monitors, which are much too heavy for extended wear or mass consumer use.

Admittedly, Cyberspace can be viewed on a standard computer monitor, but it's not the same as viewing it via the Eye-Phones, which provide depth and the sense of actually being somewhere. Walser smiled when I asked about this and commented, "I found it [the monitor] works, but not as well as having that thing right on your face. Because then





trainer (one of those devices that lets you bicycle in the comfort of your living room) and fixes a series of sensors to it. Next, you hop on the bike, don your Eye-Phones and start peddling. The *Cyberspace* system generates scenery for you, so you get the impression that you're no longer stationary in your living room, but riding through the countryside. You can steer, lean into turns and generally go just about anywhere you please.

But Hicycle is more than just a bicycle simulator. Since this is "virtual reality," we can do anything we want. Thus, the "Hi" in Hicycle refers to the fact that if you accelerate to over 20 mph, the bicycle will lift up off the ground, and you can //y it!

Cyber Hardware

Of course, Cyberspace wouldn't be possible without modern microcomputer technology. But, even as powerful as highend personal computers are today, most simply don't have what it takes to make it

gas, Atari STs and so forth—any machine that can do the job. Toward this end the *Cyberspace* programs are all written in C++ code, which is very portable and can be moved to many systems.

Autodesk hopes that Cyberspace technology will be affordable for public use, rather than just for major corporations and research centers. The main problem is the cost and complexity of the hardware. In the next few years the rate of advancing technology should make Cyberspace systems relatively cheap and affordable, though they are currently unite expensive.

To achieve affordability, the Cyberspace team is actively seeking established companies to participate in the development of the system, particularly the hardware. "Autodesk is not in hardware. We strictly do software," says Cyberspace architect Randal Walser.

"One of the things we've tried to do from the beginning is stimulate competi[with the Eye-Phones] you can look around, and your body just sort of says Yeah! You're in there."

The Cyberspace team is looking for better sensors than those they are currently using and eventually hope to be able to go beyond just reading the position of the head and a gloved hand and move on to whole body tracking": monitoring the movement of every body joint. Such tracking may be possible by using video cameras and special sensor patches, ultrasonics or magnetic sensors.

The prototype Cyberspace system uses Polhemus magnetic sensors, which work but are expensive and can be disrupted by magnetic fields and metal objects. Experiments using currently available consumer items as potential input devices are being explored. Autodesk has recently been experimenting with using a Power Glove (made by Mattel for the NES).

Since the idea is to simulate reality and natural response wherever possible, a number of goals have been set to make the Cyberspace experience more "real." For example, there is discussion of feedback systems, which would allow the user to feel what he or she is doing. Thus a Cyberspace racquetball player might feel a simulated impact on the racket, or a Hicycle rider might find that it takes more effort to pedal uphill rather than down. (As we go to press, we have learned that the latter is now working.)

Moving around in Cyberspace has also been given considerable thought. One idea for circumventing the limitations of space imposed by most rooms is the use of treadmills. For example, an updated Hicycle could allow you to stop the bike, get off and walk

through ICE can have his brain waves "flatlined" in the attempt.

Autodesk's version of Cyberspace is different in a number of ways, the most important being that there is no mental link between man and machine and no risk of an unwary user being "flatlined." ("Oh, we're working on that!" jokes Walser.) Otherwise, the Autodesk system could be used to represent computer networks in the same fashion as Gibson's called Cyber Ridge. "It was quite ambitious," Walser recalls. "The idea was basically to do what we're doing here: put people in a space, a large space, which they are completely free to explore."

Walser and his colleagues traveled to Utah, found an appropriate ridge and spent about six weeks there photographing it with a 360-degree panoramic camera. They triangulated every strategically important point on the ridge. "The notion



may find the term Cyberspace familiar. The name originated with author William Gibson, whose strange and surreal vision of a virtual reality was made famous in his writings, including the award-winning Neuromancer.

In Gibson's work, Cyberspace is a computer-generated reality. Rather than viewing with goggles and manipulating with high-tech gloves and other hardware, the user hooks himself up to a special terminal with electrodes. His mind receives direct input from virtual reality.

Gibson's Cyberspace simulates a vast network of computers and information: an enormous geometric landscape. This "grid" depicts computer systems and companies as abstract geometric forms, like buildings on a glowing graph. Information can be accessed by entering one of the structures.

Of course, some structures are not open to just anyone, and many are guarded by a protection system called ICE. The worst part of Gibson's Cyberspace is that it can be a deadly place where a "console cowboy" who tries to break

works suggest and even go beyond that.

During my visit to Autodesk, I met a few members of the Cyberspace team: All of them radiated an infectious and palpable excitement about their work. The project falls into the department of Eric Lyons, director of new technology, who manages the CAD-related aspects of the Cyberspace project. Team members include Christopher Allis (research), Patrice Gelband, Ph.D. (programmer), Faan-Hoan Liu (digital interfacing), Gary Wells (3-D object modeling and design), Eric Gullichsen (whose card reads "Cyberpunk-Artificial Reality Technology") and, of course, Randal Walser (Cyberspace architect), manager of sportsand entertainment-related aspects of the Cyberspace project. It was Walser who wrote the basic framework of the Cyberspace system.

Walser's background before coming to Autodesk prepared him for the Cyberspace project. In the early '80s he worked for a subsidiary of Bally/Midway on a project that was to be a video-disk-based game was that you could maneuver a vehicle around on that ridge and you could stop at certain 'fire bases,' as we called them, where the imagery became photo-realist all around you," explains Walser. "At any time you could jump out into space and see a schematic view.

"It got pretty far along. We got the images [of the ridge], and we developed the game to the point where we could see things out there moving around. We built models of helicopters and tanks and weathered and photographed them from bunches of angles. It was all happening-and just about that time the games industry. . ." This statement trails off into a throat-slashing gesture and sound.

The Bally subsidiary Walser worked for was closed completely, and he eventually ended up building simulations for an AI (artificial intelligence) company in Mountain View, California. Later, he got funded by the Army ("Of all people," Walser laughs) and worked on tele-robotics. "But it really was all related to this," he points out, "and this is what it's come to."

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. . . And Where It's Going

During our conversation, Walser stressed that the main thing about Cyberspace is that it's a medium as opposed to a technology. The team has been comparing it to television, film and the telephone.

"Strangely, computers don't have a lot to do with it [from the user's perspective]," explains Walser. "Computers are going to be sort of behind the scenes. We've gone out of our way to keep keyboards, mice and so forth out of the picture, just to make the point that what we have here is a very new paradigm."

There are a lot of plans for what Cyberspace can become and what it can do. One of the main goals in the minds of the Autodesk team is interactivity.

"We'll be getting multiple people into the spaces at some point," says Walser. This means that not only can you have mere functional interactivity but, "you can have a social experience. You can do the kinds of things that one does in the ordinary world with [other] people. We plan to have a voice channel that is strictly for language. It's like a telephone, together with the channel for the spoken keywords, and we'll have a switch to

flip between them. We could talk. You could be in New York and I could be here [in California], but we could be in the same Cyberspace, next to each other."

Two or more people sharing an alternate reality? The possibilities are staggering. Imagine a group of artists sitting in a Cyberspace "room" holding a conference. One person could sketch on a virtual pad in Cyberspace and then

hand the drawing around to those sharing the virtual space with him! Or picture driving or Hicycling through a virtual city based upon a map of a real city. You could learn your way around town long before you ever traveled there.

"That's certainly possible sometime in the future," agrees Walser. "Visualization is going to be one of the big, big markets for this. Training comes to mind. Education. Entertainment. We've always been aware of that. But it's going to be big in general. It's going to cut across just about every market you can think of."

And what about games? The Cyberspace team is looking at a junction between leisure-time companies, theme parks, video games and fitness clubs. "Any kind of full-body involvement," says Walser. "What I envision is kind of an alternative arcade. Or another way to think about it is as an alternative social gathering place. Instead of going to the bowling alley, you go to this virtual space. I like the social aspect. It suggests team sports. Imagine going to your fitness club and meeting your buddies afterward in a bar where the TV screens replay what you did. Whole new sports will be born from this."

For example, there are plans afoot to turn Hicycle into a true game rather soon. "We may even do something like dog-fighting," Walser smiles. "You can imagine, with two or three people in this space, dogfights or going after flag stations or whatever. It would be pretty incredible."

Indeed! When I finished playing racquetball in *Cyberspace*, the first thing I pictured was playing doubles in tennis with people anywhere else in the country!

objects were doing."

Thus, the ball could become a whiffle ball, a beach ball or a tennis ball and the paddle turned into whatever was needed!

When I asked about any other games the team might be planning, Gelband explained, "Right now we're writing a product. We're not really doing games at this point. Racquetball, to me, was the perfect way to show off. It's like 3-D Pong. It was the obvious thing to do. It's got all this simple physics and collision detection and everything you need to really get into Cyberspace: acting with bodies as if they were real three-dimensional objects with solid properties. I think that's what will give the video-game user the feeling that they're in there. They can then make that leap of faith and start believing all sorts of things you want to tell them about their world."

"It's all about illusion," says Walser.
"All we're trying to do is trick human senses. It's an artificial reality. The bottom line is how it feels to the patron."

"When all the interactions feel right and look right, you start *believing* it," adds Gelband.

And where is it all going? In a few years, playing a game on a TV screen might seem as boring as a board game seems compared

to a video game today. In that future, you can imagine that you're playing Cauntlet VIII, standing, sword and shield in hand, in a Cyberspace dungeon. You are accompanied by half a dozen fellow explorers who share the adventure with you, despite the fact that they are actually scattered almost anywhere in the world. One of them turns to face you, shouts a warning and points over

your shoulder. You wheel about to find a hideous troll looming over you, breathing down your neck. You are there! "This has the inherent ability, it seems, to grab people emotionally," Walser sums up. "People have literally come out of [Cyberspace] with tears in their eyes, saying they never felt so liberated. It seems like this year, for some reason, it's in the wind everywhere. Everyone wants to get into it. It's just exploded."



Of course, just simulating mundane reality isn't all Cyberspace can do. Programmer Patrice Gelband told me, "With two lines of programming I could make this racquetball thing move continuously from a racquetball game to a paddleball game where you have a wooden paddle with an elastic band attached to the ball. And I could just hit the keyboard or whatever, and the game would just change, continuously. It would feel like that's what the

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WINNERS DON'T USE DRUGS



YEA

For months we've received lots of positive response on the Easter Egg Hunt column in vexce. We'd like to turn around and give Sega a handshake for their bold decision to put some of their own easter eggs right in their game manuals. Most of these hints allow the player to enter an option screen or continue the game after the character dies. The example shown here, from the Genesis game Thunder Force II, lets you enter an option screen that lets you select just how hard you want the game to be, choose whether to have rapid-fire weapons or not,

even listen to the different sounds and music tracks that make up the game. Smart strategy, Segal





There is an increasing trend in the arcade industry, as shown here at the start of Fabtek's

Dynamite Duke, to put messages in games that show strong disapproval of drug use. voage commends these companies and hopes that more efforts of this type

are undertaken. There's very little to prevent displays of this sort from being programmed into a game—heck, there's even an anti-drug message that comes up on the score display of the Evira and the Party Monsters pinball game—but the rewards are enormous. Video- and computer-game manufacturers: Are you listening?

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SOUND

Certain hard-core game players who have purchased Sega Genesis and NEC TurboGrafx-16 consoles have been growling to vesce lately. While these gamers are generally happy with the higher quality of these machines, the main complaint has to do with the lack of hardware that is packaged with the game systems. Both the Genesis and the TurboGrafx-16 come with just one controller, which handicaps the ability to play multiplayer games. The TG-16 makes it even harder by requiring you to buy a TurboTap before you can hook additional controllers into the machine.

Also, a big gripe has to do with the lack of monitor connections, preventing players from displaying the graphics at the highest quality these two systems are capable of. The Genesis has the ability to output to a monitor, but requires a non-standard cable that isn't included with the system—unless you happen to own a Sega Master System and still have your cables. Furthermore, the only way you can output the stereo sound from the Genesis is to run a separate cable from the headphone jack to a stereo system. The TurboGrafx-16, on the other hand, requires the player to purchase an additional piece of hardware, the TurboBooster, to run audio and video signals to a monitor and/or stereo.

We realize that this added video-game power comes at a cost and

that these companies are trying to keep the overall cost of a system down to a minimum to avoid scaring off potential customers with sticker shock. But do we need to take multiple trips to our local store—risking the possibility that these items will be out of stock—to pick up the add-ons that will give us the full benefit of our purchase? And besides, why are there so few two-player games for these systems? Hmmm...?

NAY

We've received some complaints recently from various readers who are getting tired of entering long passwords to reenter their video games. We appreciate that many companies are jumping on the bandwagon and offering passwords in their products—to make it easier for players to finish games in chunks rather than having to complete them



in one sitting—but guys, try to imagine how tedious it is to enter a 32-character password (out of a choice of 60 characters) each time you die. To make it worse, many of the characters look similar, mixing upper and

lowercase letters and numbers. There's nothing more discouraging than to get deep into a game, write down the password, then find it doesn't work because you couldn't tell whether a character was a capital I or a number 1.



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Screens from Apple II version of the game Screens for other systems may vary

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Look for the Power Glove in the movie



Going for the Dragons: What's a kid to do? Wasn't it enough that he, Wonder Boy, had to furiously A Player's Guide to Wonder Boy III battle his way through two previous adventures? How much is one kid supposed to take? Now here he is on the threshold of a new journey, and he finds himself turned into a. . . a. . . lizard! And eccording to legend, the only wey he can return to human shape is by loceting the Salamender Cross, which has been hidden somewhere in Monster Land by the dreaded vampire dragon by Clayton Walnum VG&CE . JANUARY 1990

What's a kid to do?

What you can do (if you own a Sega Master System) is run down to your nearest video game dealer, and pick up a copy of Wonder Boy Ill: The Dragon's Trap. You won't regret it. This is a delightful and challenging game that will have you manipulating your control pad for days on end.

In this article, and the one to follow next month, we'll give you a close look at Wonder Boy III. As always, we suggest that if you already own the game, play it before you read too much of the information presented here. It's always more fun to dis-

cover things for yourself. If you read our clues prematurely, you may decrease your enjoyment of the game. However, if you haven't yet purchased Wonder Boy III, you may browse through this article in order to decide if the game is something you'd enjoy. It's unlikely you'll remember many of the clues once you do start to play.

Monster Land

Monster Land consists of many different areas, including jungles, deserts and underwater scenes. As Wonder Boy progresses in the game, he must

make his way through all of these areas, fighting off the many enemies that will block his way. During his travels, he must search for items that will help him complete his quest. Hidden throughout Monster Land are many secret doors and treasure chests. all of which contain valuable surprises.

You begin your quest (after completing the opening scene in the castle) at the village. The village is Monster Land's central point, where you always begin your travels. Every time you continue a game, you will begin in the village.

Monster Land is, of course, overloaded with mon-





Don't go straight here; iather, fall down the well.

Human 4

Exit through this door—but be ready to do battle! To defeat Meka Dragon, stay to the left, jumping when he gets

close and hitting him on the nose with your sword. When the battle is over, you will be changed into Lizard-Man.

Another easy-to-kill cyclops. You'll find several of them in this corridor, all guarding the approach to Meka Dragon.

Human 6



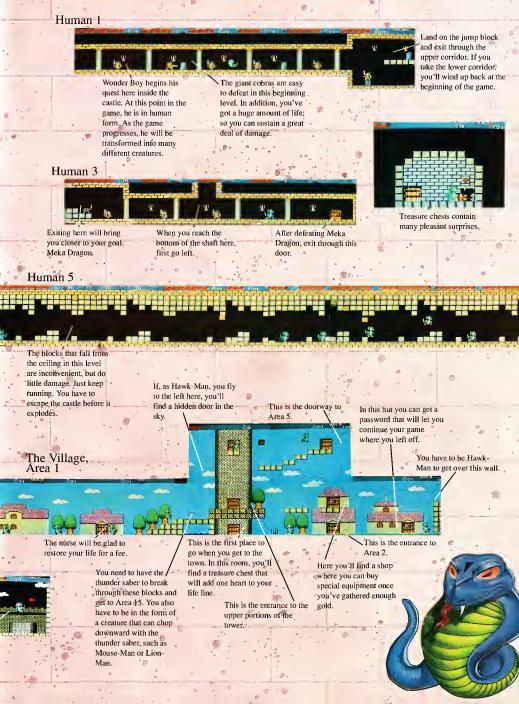
The opening in the ceiling here is the exit.
You must wait for the falling blocks to form stairs.

Follow the arrow to get away from the castle.
Once you make it out, you'll be able to watch the castle crumble to dust

Only Mouse-Man can climb this wall.



fump to the left as you come up from the well.



sters (Where do you think it got its name?) All of them are out to stop Wonder Boy from finding the Salamander Cross, so it will be nonstop fighting once he steps away from the village. But that's okay. Fighting is the only way (outside of finding treasure chests) that Wonder Boy can earn the gold he'll need to buy important items from the many shops.

Creatures and Armor

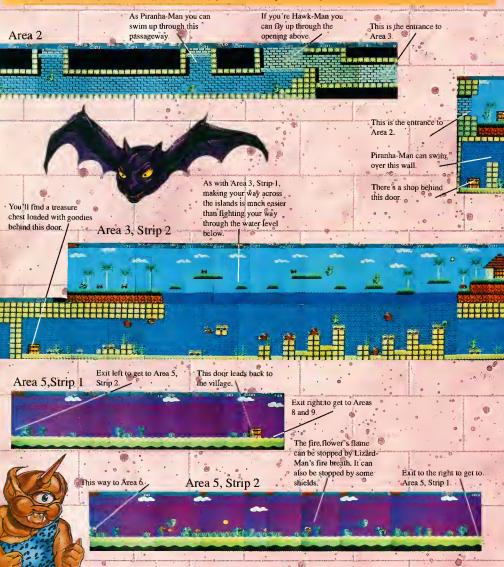
Each time Wonder Boy defeats one of the boss dragons, he'll be changed into another type

of creature. There are five creatures. Lizard-Man, Mouse-Man, Piranha-Man, Lion-Man and Hawk-Man. Each of these forms has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, Mouse-Man is the only creature that can walk on mouse blocks, while Hawk-Man is the only creature that can fiv.

A creature's individual abilities can be enhanced by the various swords, shields and armor you can purchase at the shops. Each piece of equipment has a rating for attacking power (how much damage the weapon will do), defense points (how much protection from attack the item provides) and charm points.

In addition to their offensive and defensive powers, different equipment items work better in certain situations. For example, dragon mail will protect you from injury should you fall into lava. Finally, certain types of armor increase your chances of getting hearts, gold and other items.

There are a huge number of creature, sword, shield and armor combinations that can be tried.



You will have to experiment to find out what works best. However, it's unlikely you'll ever try every combination. Its complexity is one of the things that makes Wonder Boy III so great.

Rewards in Battle

Sometimes when you defeat an enemy, he'll drop something valuable. Usually it will be gold, but it may also be a special weapon. These weapons include fireballs, thunder, tornadoes, arrows and boomerangs. All of these

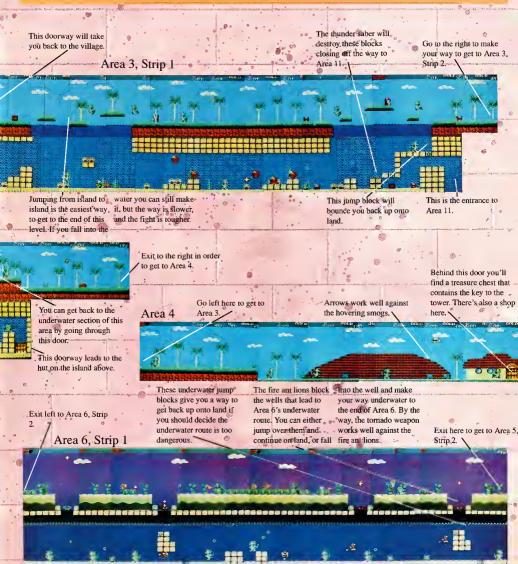
weapons can be stored, until you lose all your lives (only gold and the items you've purchased are retained when you reenter a game using a password), and used where most effective. The arrows, for example, are great for killing off the hovering smog, and the boomerangs are good when you want to defeat an enemy from a distance.

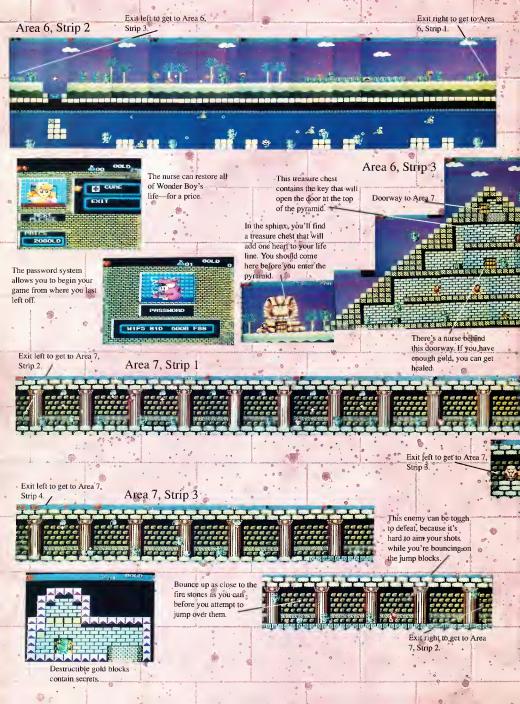
Once again, you'll need to experiment. As you're playing, try the different weapons on different enemies, and see how those enemies

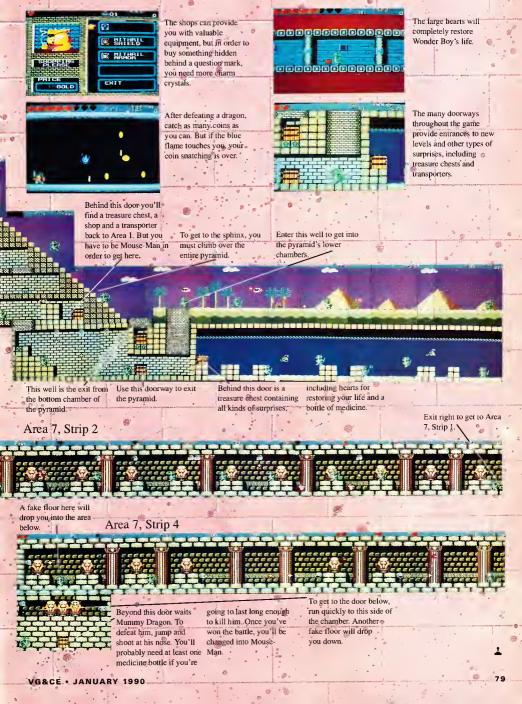
are affected.

Let's Get on With It!

There's not that much to be said about the playing of Wonder Boy III. Most of the clues you need can be found on the maps that follow. But before we get to the maps, we'll give you a last piece of advice: Although you can wander fairly freely throughout Monster Land, you'll have the best luck if you play the areas in the order in which we've numbered them. Good luck!











Strategy Stration

by Andy and Bissy Eddy

War is hell, or so the saying goes. It's bad enough to be in the trenches with bullets and shrapnel flying around you, but the worst position to be in is trapped behind lashed bamboo bars, a "guest" of the enemy forces.

Thara you sit in reletive seclusion, joined by insects, vermin end hostile, non-English-speaking guards. But the mind is elways working, thinking of every to get free from your captors. Feigning e stomach cramp on the floor of your hut, pleying on tha few shreds of humanity end sympethy your "hosts" heve buried away, you menage to draw one of the guards close enough to feel tha ground shift with his movements.

Though your senses have been dulled by the prolongad derkness and lack of food, you draw up the remainder of your anergy end spring like a cat. Grebbing the granade on the belf of your downed foe, you pull the pin then dive back, using the guerd's body to shield you from the blast. Feeling the shock of the explosion, you real for a moment, but quickly make your wey through tha smokey opening, knowing that if you wait too long, the swarms of awakened guerds will be on you like vultures on e cercaes.

Gethering e strategy, you know thet the easiast pert of your escape is behind you. Sure, you are one of the finest soldiers in the whole country, but behind enemy linas you ere vestly outnumbared. You'll have to drew on your finely honed skills end gather waapons es you go: relying first on hend-to-hend combat to loosen knives end rifles from your adversaries es you meka your wey back

to the sefety of your own instellation. Can you hendle it? Are you up to the task?

If you choose to take on SNK's P.O.W. you'd batter be reedy for some hard-fought combet. Most of the game involves punching end kicking, but you cen ecquire limited weaponry along the way. You can greb knives end guns, the most common implements dropped by the enamy, as well as explosives that cen be used to destroy e couple of the heevy crefts that roll through your trevels.

There ere elso some bonus rooms thet, following a bettle with one to six enemy soldiers, will give you an item to anhance your current condition.

These ere:

Bullet Proof Vest—When you gat this item, it gives you protection from gunshots end thrown knivas.

Bress Knucklas—As the manuel stetes, this doubles your hand-to-hend fighting power.

Life—This brings your life ber up to full again.

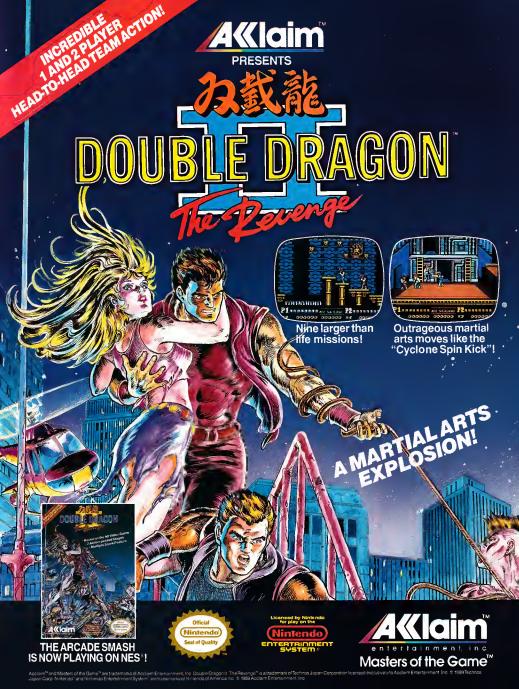








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CIRCLE #138 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

LEVEL 1

This first section is very easy, requiring you to hit each of the soldiers only once to knock them out of the battle.

Here's your first chance to get a gun and move through the next few attackers with ease. If you want to save bullets, be warned that butting an adversary with the rifle is much riskier.

The foot soldiers here will take off if they hit you. Also, watch out for your first encounter with a grenade-throwing soldier.

Here's your first bonus room, which contains brass knuckles to enhance your fighting power. Special fighting hint: You'll notice a column of boxes in the upper-right-hand comer of the room. If you position yourself at the place where the box meets the right wall, only one foe will take you on and any others will be stuck on the top wall. Once the first attacker is dispatched, move a short distance down along the right wall and the next attacker will move into position for easy defeat.







LEVEL 2

These transport vehicles contain bonus items, like the buildings in Level 1. Watch yourself because they also have enemy troops in them too. This one has only one knife-wielding foe.

There are two guys in this truck, and the best strategy is to move to the top of the screen right away to get rid of the first guy, then move down and take out the Right after you leave this truck, head to the "front" of the screen. This will keep you away from the motorcycle that comes from the right. Keep moving and as soon as you clear the comer of the fence, head back upward and behind the fence, which will protect you from the second motorcycle.

The first few characters here won't attack you, they will stroll right by if you don't knock them out of the battle. It's a good opportunity to get some extra points without fear of reprisal.

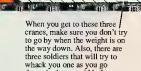






What follows are some tips that you can use as quidelines for standard battle right off the bat, Then you can use the maps and associated ceptions to help you through the tougher eraas and with tha characters you'll meet.

 When you kick or punch, do it when the opponent is just out of range. This way, you will be out of his renga, and he'll walk into your strike.



through. As we said before, make sure you take a swing before the attackers get too close.

When you enter the water, the only way to attack any comers is to punch them, you can't kick your enemies under water. Right as you get into the water, one guy will come along and toss a grenade at you. Just stay as far to the right as you can and you'll be safe.

When you enter the building, keep your eye open for a guy sneaking up on you from the right. Also, if you hit him right away, he'll drop a knife. Grab it

You'll be able to get another gun

After you take care of the two Green Berets just outside this building, move as fast as you can to the right. This will help you get past the grenade-tossing soldier on the ladder.

When you get to this ladder, your character will automatically climb to the next section.

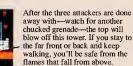






You should watch out in this section for the blade-slashers, who enhance their attack with a power roll toward you. If you can stand your ground without being attacked by someone else, kick out as soon as your enemy gets on the other side of you and you'll take him down.

Once you take out the Green Beret, you'll face three attackers: One will come from the right and the other two from the left. Watch out because the one at the lower-left will chuck a knife at you.



Here you will meet the first of the level bosses, though not a single character. You have to knock dynamite out of the hands of the enemy and throw five sticks at the assault chopper before you can move on. Don't forget the guys with the knives as you try to get the explosives. After you take out the chopper, you'll leap off the platform and head out away from the P.O.W. camp-but not out of danger.



attack you.

Walk as fast as you can through this building at the front. When you exit the building, go immediately to the far front, which should keep the motorcycle off your back.

Stay away from the top of the screen here, because the commando will move to the left, turn right and take a shot,



This is an underwater bonus room, and you should deal with the attackers the same way as you just did. When you finish the room, you'll get a bullet-proof

Keep your eyes open for attackers popping out of the water. They will always appear at your back, so all you have to do is turn quickly and pop out a couple of fists to put them off.



- Aftar you knock en opponent to the ground. hover right next to him for e second then quickly kick him again. Most of your attackers only raquire two knock-downs to be forever out of your hair. This attacking stretegy should be timed to hit your foe just before he gets to his feet. A little prectice will tell you how long to wait before you should strike.
- Wetch the enemy's feet. Sure it sounds stranga. but it will get you lined up on their row so you can immediately start pummeling them.
- If you get lucky, you can take out two opponents et the same time. Don't count on it, though, or you'll end up getting hit from behind.

.keep to the top and avoid the bike soldiers. Again, stay off the lines because there are more gunmen coming from the right and

There's another bonus room here, but you'll have to get past a barrage of foes before you can get there. Once inside the room. you can use the same strategy we previously described. You can recharge your life force too.

. . . and the knives and grenades here.

Stick to the top of the walkway, and you'll be clear of the knifethrowing goons here. .



Stay off the tile creases or you'll get shot by the gunmen-two followed by one-that come in from the left, then. . .

Two more knife tossers and a grenade. Stay to the middle of the screen after the knives fly past.

"the soldier with the spring-loaded shoes." When he gets close to you, he'll leap over your head, back and forth. The only way to kill him is to move as soon as he jumps, timing it so that you'll be near where he lands. As soon as he hits the ground, send a kick flying his way, and you'll knock him for a loop before he has a chance to start another jump. Watch out when he gets up, though, because he'll be one angry military man!

Here's the first occurrence of

Into the jungle we go. If you position yourself in the crook of the trees, you'll have a better shot at walking away unscratched.

LEVEL 3

avoid the two grenade throwers. The cave contains a bullet-proof vest, but if you don't need or want it, you'd best stay out of this room. The soldiers inside are hard to clear and will take a chunk out of your life force.

Here's a bonus cave, and if you

get into it fast enough, you'll





The guys in this cave aren't as difficult as in the last attackers, but you should go up as far as possible, take a few shots, move to the front, let loose a couple more shots, go up, etc. You'll find brass knuckles when you're done.

THE CLASS CO.

Keep your eyes on the left side of the screen; there will be two more men entering to throw a knife and a grenade at you.

You should walk away from the confrontation here with a rifle.

LEVEL 4



After exiting the last room and facing a few more easy foes-watch out for the one knife that gets thrown from the left-you'll climb a ladder to an elevated platform.

In this bonus room, you'll face three attackers. Don't rest after you get rid of the trio, because three more will come out of the hole in the center of the floor to take you on. Keep moving and you'll sustain fewer hits. When you're done you'll get brass knuckles.





Try to enter this room and you won't have to battle the two soldiers at the entrance. This room has you facing a similar number of adversaries as the previous room, and a bullet-proof vest will be your reward.

Trouble, gang. Don James is the first really tough level boss. It might not be too hard to get by him, but you have to get the routine down. If you stay too far away from this dude, he'll take rifle shots at you; if you get too close, he'll drop grenades at your feet.

-un

The best way to deal with him is to stay just off the line he is standing on (to avoid his bullets), then jump and kick at him when you get close enough. At that point, if you use the left-right method we mentioned in the general notes, you should be able to strike enough blows to finish him off

• When you wrestle a weepon to the ground, use it immadiately. Not employing it right ewey mey result in missing another waapon right after. And meke sure that when you knock a waapon away from an attecker it is ewey from the edge of the screen, or you may not be eble to reech it.

Also, ba careful not to throw a knife or shoot your gun whan e cheracter is just off the screan edge. This will only result in a wastad waapon beceusa the anemy cen only ba hit on-screen.

• If you ere using e gun, occesionelly scan the number of shots you have left. When you ere out of bullets, you will still hold the rifle, which mey slow your punching end kicking. Throwing e punch while holding en empty gun will get rid of it.

 You don't heve to entar a room whare there is a bonus. Use our meps to select which ones you naed.

When you hit this segment, you'll find not only frogmen but knife-bearing soldiers also. Be ready for them to rapidly advance or to throw a knife. They'll even hop out of the river at you! It normally takes three solid hits to get rid of them (signaled by flying across the water). Concentrate on one at a time.

Watch out above you when you exit the water, because there's a grenade thrower in the trees. Stay close to the back wall, and you should be okay. Hustle and you won't have to worry much.

The adversaries you take on here are extremely aggressive, and their power-roll technique is hard to beat. Stand your ground and be ready as soon as they stand up.



Watch out for the gunmen when you reach here.

At the end of this junglescape, you'll leap off in front of a waterfall. Get ready to use your water-based battle skills,

You'll meet up with another spring-loaded soldier, as well as a Green Beret who shies away from your kicks. If you want to get rid of him, you either have to use punches (the best strategy) or kick at him when he is too close to move away. By using the latter method you risk him hitting you first, though.

You'll have your back to the wall here, but you can use that to your advantage. Place your character in the crook in the wall, facing to the left. You'll again set up a situation where only one soldier takes you on at once, but you may have to venture out to the left to draw them into battle. Make sure you back against the wall again or you'll leave yourself open to an attack from the

This cave contains a life-force boost. Watch when you exit the cave or you'll be taken down by the knife that's whipped at you from the left. At the end of this level, you'll meet Angel, the elevator boss. To get past him, you'll need to put lots of jump kicks into him. The best method is to start a jump kick well before he plows into you, then do the old left-right routine to keep him off balance. Before long, you'll toss him clear out of the elevator and move on to infiltrate the enemy camp in Level 4.

At this juncture, the soldiers that come in to fight you only want to take a few shots then leave. The same goes for the knife throwers that come by after you finish with most of the combatants. You'll have the opportunity to get a knife or two to help your cause.



When you get to the end of the platform, you'll jump down. Pick up a gun here. We're getting there!

Provided you have the gun, this stretch will be easier if you stay at the top edge of the platform. That way the soldiers that come from the left will line right up for an easy shot-and if you wait, you can take out two or even three enemies with one blast.

There are some rooms where the opponent inside will do more damage than tha bonus is worth. Wa'll alert you to those areas.

• If you have a bunch of adversaries taking you on at the antrance to a room. enter and when you leave, you will usually find your attackers gona.

• When you face a larga number of attackers, try to concentrata on one single foe, at least until you are ovarrun with enemias in closa proximity. Keep in mind that switching your attention from one foe to another usually results in an immediate offensiva attack from the soldier at your back.

Watch out here because there will be three guys immediately on your case. And make sure you

grab the gun as soon as it falls to the ground or the attacker will pick it up again. As soon as you take care of the first batch, keep to the right to avoid getting blown up by the grenade throw-

...followed by more knife and grenade slingers. . .

More knife and grenade tossers, then more hand-to-hand combat.

ending with a bank of gun-toting commandos. You can walk away with a firearm if you survive. Take your time or you get killed by the two sets of knives and grenades that fly right and

Again, go to the top of the walkwa, and wait until the soldiers line up with your rifle, then fire away!

LEVEL 5

.face another Don James-like boss with grenades and a gun, like the one you met at the end of Level 2. By now you should have the method down.

Yet another nasty knife and grenade combination.

Keep at the top to survive the gunshots that come here.

> This is getting thick, with soldiers coming in right and left. Here are a couple more knife tossers, followed by a pair of grenade throwers.

0.00 123288 0.00 123288 0.00 1 10 Tables 133288 0.00 This level is short, but ends with a bang! You'll face a handful of attackers, be able to grab a knife then...

Here's your last challenge-a flipping muscleman named The Leader, who's almost twice your size. Jump kicks will be your best weapon, but your opponent will be all over the screen, so be careful. You'll get him at his weakest if you tag him just as he is hitting the ground. Also, stand your position and let him maneuver closer to you.

Warning: When he hits the turf the first time, he's not finished! He'll return to his feet for another round of combat. And when the background goes black, you've succeeded. You're homeward bound! And though they didn't quite spell it correctly, give yourself a pat on the back-you earned it!





Escape from prison mission complete





Congreturation!

As a questionable piece of programming, it would appear that you could hide from some shots behind this wall, but don't count on it. You just have to keep moving.

Another bonus room with a bosstype character in it, and again, you'll get a life-force boost if you clear it.

You'll meet one knife thrower and one grenade thrower at this point, then stay at the top to avoid the motorcycles.



opponents in this section, you can enter this bonus room-but think about it first. The room contains another boss like the one at the end of Level 2. If you didn't have difficulty with the first one take this one on; but if you are low on lives, don't mess with him. If you finish him off, you'll be rewarded with a lifeforce boost. Try to pin him in the corner and pummel him with kicks.

est part of the game, where you'll face the flamethrowers. If you keep moving ahead in bits, you'll find some safe spots—watch out for crossfire. Additionally, they spice up the action with some single hand-tohand combatants. The only advice we can give is to jump kick if it looks like you are going to get baked. Also, you may leap over the flames.

After you radio for a pickup from



Before you enter this room, you can avoid the trio of assailants who are content to stroll on by. The room contains another six attackers, who will leave you with a life-force booster. Exiting the room will again put three strolling soldiers in the frame.

Watch out for the two gunmen here. The opponents you face afterward will let you use their knives against them.







You'll be forced to meet-and beat-nearly a dozen combatants before you face Snivel, a wimpylooking character. Don't let his appearance fool you: He's got a gun and tracks you incessantly. If he gets near you, he'll get so close that you can't get a shot in at him. Try to get far enough away that he can't get on your back, but close enough to pepper him with jump kicks and to prevent his shooting at you. He's not hard to beat, if you don't let him control the battle.





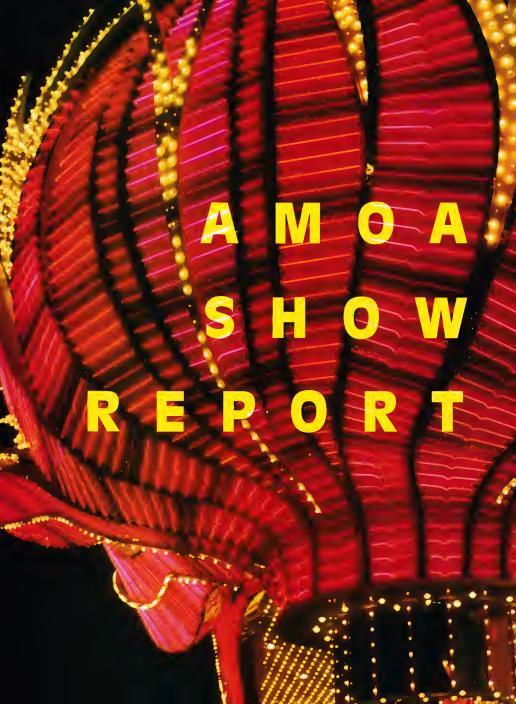
 When you reach a level boss, get as closa as you can-without getting hit yourself-and use the jump kick to damage him. Once tha boss is hit, try to continually releasa jump kicks in a left-right-laft-right motion while ha is stunned, and you'll find yourself getting

away scot-frea.

 If you sae an enamy character making a sudden changa in movement, such as a roll on tha ground or quickly backing up, make a beeline away from the vertical line you ara on. Especially in the later sections of the gama, this movement signals an attack coming on. Seeing that the attackers line up their offensive at the sama row you are on, moving up or down on the screan will usually put you out of range.

 Also get used to the sign of a fee throwing a knife or explosive or shooting a gun

at you. When you see it happening, quickly move out of the line of fire. In some cases, if you know that you are going to get hit, use the jump kick at the last second-sometimes the game lets you get away alive.







by Andy Eddy and Patrick J. Kelley

LAS VEGAS, A LAND OF LIGHTS, GLITZ AND GLAMOUR. IT'S A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GO TO EXPERIENCE THE HIGH LIFE AND TAKE SOME CHANCES WITH THEIR MONEY — CHANCES THAT MAY RESULT IN A BIG PAYOFF.

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, IN MID-SEPTEMBER, ANOTHER GROUP OF PEOPLE TRAVELED TO VEGAS TO TAKE SOME CHANCES WITH THEIR MONEY. THE AMUSEMENT AND MUSIC OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (AMOA) HELD THEIR ANNUAL







Romstar's Caliber 50

show, a demonstration of what's new and exciting in coin-operated fare, and rolled the dice hoping that the coming year would bring a jackpot.

Since the early '80s, the arcade industry has been struggling under the weight of the growing home video-game market. While the coin-operated games generally set the precedent for what will appear in cartridge form afterward, the interest in carting yourself down to the neighborhood arcade for a few games has waned. This is particularly the case given the threat that the new game consoles, which challenge

the abilities of the far more expensive arcade machines, are now available for home use.

Valerie Cognevich, editor of Play Meter magazine, a trade publication that covers the coin-op industry, observed that the arcade operators aren't as concerned about this as they have been in the past. "Surprisingly,

there was no talk at the AMOA show. . .it wasn't a big complaint for the operators!."

Cognevich emphasized the

group aspect of video gaming, likening the situation to going to a bar to hang out with people, rather than sitting at home and having a couple of drinks. "People are still going to come to arcades to play. It's one thing to play a game at home, but it's another to go out with your friends to play—and if it's a game that you've played before, you can show off too. In the past, there was such a big gap between what you could get at home and in the arcade, but play-

Romstar's Aqua Jack



ers got tired. There's always something more you can play in an arcade. It may have been ten steps ahead [of the home consoles] before, and it's only one step ahead now, but there's a lure to going out and playing."

Threat or no threat, the arcade manufacturers came to Vegas in force, showing some products that should gulp down their share of quarters. Familiar names, such as Atari, Data East and Konami, displayed their latest coin-suckers and stood by with much anticipation that they would be hits. To have success, though, an arcade game in the '90s has to go well beyond the antiquated graphics and sound that made Space Invaders, Pong and Asteroids popular.

While familiar trends are still being utilized — as seen in driving



Romstar's Castle of the Dragon

simulators like Atari's Hard Drivin', flying games such as Namco's Metal Hawk and fantasy contests like Irem's Xmultiply — appearances are far more stunning than the early generation of coin-ops, thanks to advances in technology.

So, without further ado, let's transport ourselves back to Vegas, where we'll walk through row after row of fun and games. And it won't cost you a cent.

Romstar

Aqua Jack — A futuristic hovercraft shoot-'em-up, where you skim over various terrains, blasting away at enemy vehicles in the heat of battle.

Rambo III — Yo, Adrian! America's favorite hirsute hero is back to his military tricks in anoth-

Marvel Comics Come To Life!

You control Marvel Super Heroes in battle against Marvel Super Villains. And they have all the special talents Marvel gave them.









The X-Men Are Calling You to Action against Arcade and Magneto in Murderworld, the Amusement Park of Terror.

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Arcade and Magneto's henchmen include Wendigo • Juggemaut • Nimrod • Toad • Mystique • Silver Samurai • White Queen
Pyro • The Blob • Avalanche • Robot Sentinels.



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The Hobgoblin • Rattan • Dr. Doom himself.

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Indigenometries (28 IS), Name Heisen to CA4 and Ange, Carl for their greate Call (1977) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 to 6 on SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 to 6 on SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 to 6 on SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 to 6 on SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 to 6 on SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) weekly in SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (20) Weekly in SA4 and Cast (1971) 1151 X (



Ramstar's Castle of the Dragan

er chapter of bullets, bombs and bulging biceps.

Castle of the Dragon — A fantasy quest with an Oriental theme, full of swordplay and damsels in distress.

Sagaia — This dual-screen contest features 26 zones of intense

outer-space combat in a panoramic blaze of color.

Championship Bowling — A fast-paced, track-ball-controlled jaunt into this ageless sport of strategy and precision.

Caliber 50 — Displayed with great graphics, you must search and destroy the elusive enemy in this jungle-based shoot-'em-up.

U.S.A. Games

Hellfire — This conversion kit, a business choice that is gaining popularity with arcade owners hoping to save a buck, provides thrilling rapid-fire space confrontations with threatening alien craft.

Belam

Mega-Tech System — In a mixture of the arcade and home videogame elements, this New York-based manufacturer utilizes the Sega Mega-Drive/Genesis cartridge console as its engine. The player can select from eight different games that the arcade operator can change

quickly due to their cartridge configuration.

Winning Run — This Namco driving contest, in splendid polyon-fill graphics, has you taking to the fast track. Fasten your seat belts as you take the wheel — a steering wheel that has realistic jolts and shimmles, thanks to a feedback system that reflects what your on-screen vehicle endures.

Metal Hawk — In one of the show's best original treatments, you have to pilot your turbocharged attack helicopter to victory. As you motor through the skies, you take diving runs to destroy the enemy installations, fuel depots and other strategic targets while receiving prompts on your mission from a digitized voice-command center.

American Technos

WWF Superstar — Wrestling has been a popular theme for arcade and home video games. This version, featuring Hulk Hogan and Honky Tonk Man, among others, is an action-filled slugfest in the famed, squared circle.

Blockout — This game takes a new look, literally, at one of the most recent success stories. Where Tetris had you looking at a bin of geometric shapes from the side, this one gives you a bird's-

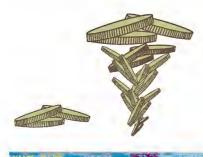


Belam/Namco Winning Run

eye view of the strategic contest from straight over the top of the playfield.

American Sammy

Lucky Joker — This innovative contest picks up on the thriving lottery concept, giving you the chance to do some simulated ticket scratching with the hopes of





Romstor's Aqua Jack

im's about to disappear.

And he's going to love it. Because tonight he'll pilot the top-secret Air Force jet that radar can't detect—the F-19 Stealth Fighter:

With the awesome F-19, you'll plunge into explosive conflicts around the globe.

To start, you can choose a training mission where enemy weapons have no effect, or a



"no-crash" mode that protects you from fatal errors. You can even select easy landings or weak enemies. As you sharpen your skills, you can take on the toughest missions in the world.

No flight simulator gives you more views of dogfights and bombing runs. Tactical View keeps both your plane and your target in view at all times, whatever your position. Tonight
Jim Quigley
will fly over
the Persian Gulf,
become invisible,
blow away
two enemy MiGs
and win the
Medal of Honor.

Just for fun.

Inverse Tactical View shows your target up close with your F-49 approaching in the distance. And TrakCam locks onto and magnifies targets. All with the hottest Super 3-D Graphics you've ever seen!

You'll have detailed maps and a keyboard overlay, so you'll spend less time finding



features and more time playing the game. And the F-19 manual psyches you for combat with incredible detail on training and equipment, stealth tactics, strategy, and real world situations.

F-19 Stealth Fighter is one more reason why we're the first, last and best name in combat simulations. So climb into F-19, strike deep into enemy territory, and disappear without a trace.

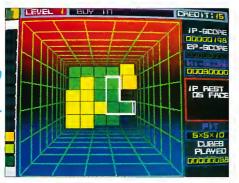


GREAT GIFT! Give F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER for a holiday blast!

Can Timo F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER? Call (301) 771-1151 x 208, weekcays 6.30 am te 5.30 pm Eastern Time and erder ay MCVHstalmEx; or mail checkmoney order for \$58 (96) (1994) disk sixe). U.S. tunds only, Vim Desidentia add 5% sales tax, MicroPress Software, tex.; 180 Lakefron Drive, Hunf Valle, MD 21030. For EMPXTATIPES/Tangly/Compatibles. Regulars 384R MM. Supports MGGVAVG. 66A. Coll and Hertrales graphics.

AICRO PROSE

American
Technos'
Breakout
(shown at right)
takes the Tetris
theme and
turns it at a different angle
than what
you're used to.



going to the final spin of the "prize" wheel.

Omega Fighter — A thrilling, deep-space shoot-out that scrolls you through myriad worlds of missile-packed terror and alien threats.

Task Force Harrier — War games are becoming a far more popular theme for video games, and this overhead-view helicopter simulator plays the part well, filling the screen with a high-energy aerial battle.

United Amusements

This Los Angeles-based company is utilizing NEC's TurboGrafx-16 home video-game console as the driver for their arcade system. This will enable the arcade operator to change games quickly, and, more

Konami's Crime Fighter lets one to four players slug through a big-city battlefield. important, let the player see games before they hit the shelves for home purchase. United Amusements has already signed a big deal to get their machines in theaters around the country. (See next month's issue of VG&CE for a detailed story on the

United Amusements/TurboGrafx-16 game system.)

Mr. Game

Motor Show — This pinball game from an Italian manufacturer is a sleek-looking table with oversized buttons and a lot of activity revolving around a carracing theme.

U.S. Games

Midnight Rescue — In a twist on the old-time mechanical games, this electromechanical contest features high-speed helicopter flying.



Konami's
S.P.Y.
(Special
Project
Y) is
filled
with lots
of action
as you
battle
your
way
through
level
after
level of
enemy
troops.



Konami

Crime Fighter — Konami is known for lots of action in their games, and this one is no different. While it looks a lot like Double Dragon, offering loads of hand-to-hand combat, this big-city battle will keep one to four players busy fighting off the thugs that constantly attack. Crime Fighter was one of the show's most popular video games.

The minute John sat down to play M1 TANK PLATOON, he was a changed man.

He knew he'd never play another tank game again.

Only M1 TANK PLATOON puts you in control of four tanks, instead of just one. And only M1 TANK PLATOON has



rolling terrain that you can climb and hide behind, like a real tank commander would!

You'll command sixteen men, and promote them as their skills improve. Plus, you can take over as commander. gunner or driver in any tank!

You can practice at a firing range on stationary or moving targets. Then take on a few unskilled foes, and as you improve, make them smarter and meaner!

In M1 TANK PLATOON, you can choose your own battles. Fight day or night, in good weather or bad. Call in air or

Last night John Roland led sixteen men into battle, survived an artillery barrage, toasted eight Soviet tanks and saved Europe.

Just for fun.

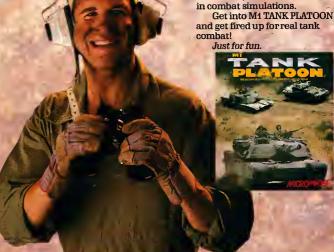
artillery support when you need it. Break through enemy lines, or fight to hold your hill. Troops and battlefields always change, so you'll never fight the same battle twice!

Your tanks carry high-tech weapons and authentic instrumentation. Zoom in on the 16,000 acre battle map to get the details, or zoom out to see everything at once!

Only M1 TANK PLATOON has a manual that tells you everything you need to know about real tank combat and tactics



All with the dazzling Super 3-D Graphics, quick thinking and non-stop action that made us the first, last and best name



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Just For Fun





S.P.Y. (Special Project Y) - This game features Contra-like action with a changing perspective on the excitement.

Nintendo

PlayChoice — While this arcade game uses NES hardware to drive it, many people are plunking quarters into it. In fact, more coins will switch hands when Nintendo brings out their new ten-game lineup for the system, featuring games like Ninia Gaiden, Pin Bot, Baseball Stars, Fester's Quest and Super Mario Bros. 3.



Dierdorf, in addition to a disappearing ramp and goal posts for kicking field goals.

Sly Spy - If you've ever wanted to play an arcade game in

the James Bond mold, this thriller is the ticket. It features a battle roval over a variety of locations including underwater and freefalling from the sky.

fighting, explosions and powerful weaponry.

Slap Shot — A game in the same vein as the older, mechanical table-hockey coin-ops, Data East brings this head-to-head competition into the '90s.

Super Volleyball - Pick up on the latest sports craze as you field a team for some gnarly spiking and digging.

Atari

Hard Drivin' - Though it came



Data East

A B C 's Monday Night Football - Data East has taken their ties to the TV show to computer screens with their game of the same name, but the arcades will see aridiron this action brought to the pinball table as well. The offers game high-tech play, including stereo play-by-play by AΙ Michaels, Frank Gifford and



S.T.U.N. Runner by Atori was one of the show's most populor omes with ts futuristic driving theme.

popular race-car simulation is still doing very well at the arcades. Among its highlights are fast polygon-fill graphics, great digitized sounds, an instant replay on any accident and a hazard-packed stunt track with a loop-de-loop and dangerous ramp jump. This game was so impressive, it was reviewed in Road and Track magazine.

Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters — This comiclike action/adventure has you battling the evil Reptilons in an effort to save Professor Sarah Bellum and the other human hostages, (See page 106 for a detailed look at this arcade game.)

Cyberball 2072 — A seguel to their popular robotic football game, this gridiron contest takes place 50 years after the "Cyberball











The viewpoint in Toito's Night Striker (shown obove) is just behind the futuristic hovercroft under your control os it zooms through vorious terroin.

League" was formed. Though it is based on human football, the players are quite different. Characteristics to keep track of include not only catching and running, but also what metal the players are made of and how wide they are.

S.T.U.N. Runner — This futuristic "driving" game could be the best game of 1990. Similar in look to Hard Drivin', this polygonfill graphics chase has you racing a jet car through tubes, over ramps and past indestructible enemies in an effort to make it to the finish line before time runs out. It's a simulator so realistic, it will make you dizzy.

Fourtrax Racing — Another racing contest that puts you in the seat of a four-wheel ATV (all-terrain vehicle) for some wild-'n'-woolly driving action.

Taito

Operation Thunderbolt

— A military shoot-'em-up
that picks up where
Operation Wolf left off. You
are equipped with a
machine gun and some
grenades to get you
through your quest, but
there is much in your way
to hinder you.

Plotting — While Tetris got people into strategic block-throwing games, this one will keep the trend moving. The player, via a cute on-screen character, throws blocks at a pile in order to knock out as many as possible.

U.S. Classic Golf — A very successful theme for video games, this golf game updates the action with stronger graphic support, making the links even more realistic.

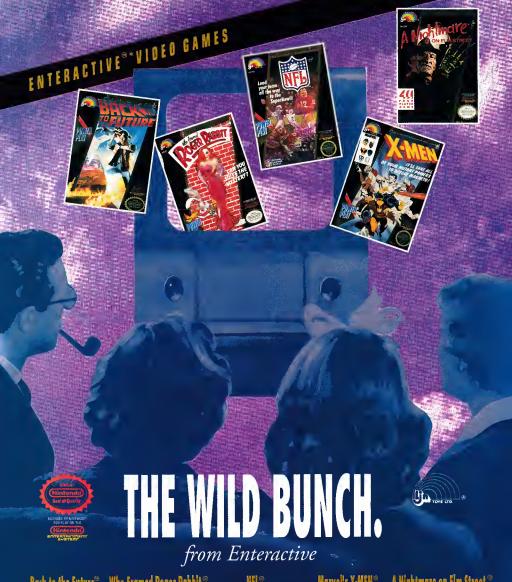


The thugs in Toito's Crime City (shown obove and below) ore relentless, but you can pick up weapons to help you get post them—or through—them.



This sit-down blastathon not only looks sleek from the outside, but also contains a high-energy flying contest. In it you have to try to obliterate all the craft that get in the windshield of your vehicle, but do it





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Marvel's X-MEN.

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Yau'll need nerves of steel because gunfire is quite comman in Taita's Crime City.

R-Type, this vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up is packed with lots of heart-pumping action.

Arch Rivals — Hit the court for hoop shots, free throws and a fair share of violent athletics in this full-contact basketball simulator.

Elvira and the Party Monsters — Everyone's favorite vampiress crosses over into yet another medium with this bold and brassy pinball game. This game was voted Best New Equipment by the AMOA at the show.

Jaleco

Big Run — Try your luck behind the wheel of a souped-up buggy on the grueling Paris-to-Dakar rally. Excellent driving feel and graphics make this one a firstclass entry.

Astyanax — You're a mystical

before they get to you first.

Crime City — While it seems that Double Dragon and Renegade made the "run, punch and shoot sortie through the streets of the city" popular, this game perpetu-

ates the genre with much excitement.

Williams

Police Force - The rage in pinball is multilevel, multiball action. and Williams knows how to pull it off with more innovation. Their latest effort is highlighted with multiple ramps that are tied to special highscoring features, a fully digitized soundtrack and a

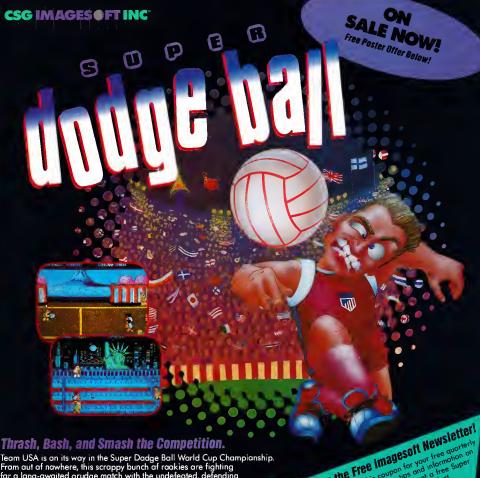
A peek at the backglass on Williams' Palice Force pinball game.

moving police car inside the game that releases locked balls.

Bally/Midway

Zero Wing - Similar in style to





Team USA is an its way in the Super Dadge Ball Warld Cup Champianship. Fram aut of nowhere, this scroppy bunch of rookies are fighting far a lang-awaited grudge match with the undefeated, defending warld champians, Team USSR.

Have you slammed into Super Dodge Ball yet?

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AND COMING SOON!

Score Big with the Ultimate Pinball Game!!

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warrior in this Legendary Axe-like game. Try your skill against horrible demons and beasties as you make your way through colorful backgrounds.

Gametek

Wheel of Fortune

— If you've always
wanted in on the
action, here's your
chance to spin for
simulated cash and
prizes. So real, you'll



Jaleco's Big Run (shown ot left ond tenter) re-creates the Poris-to-Dakor rood rally on the orcode screen.

you must do battle with the minions of evil across detailed backdrops and varied settings.

Coors Light
Bowling — Grab your
bowling bag and get
ready to hit the alleys
in this amazing sports
simulator.

U.N. Squadron — All that's missing in this great new game is

a flight suit. Hop in your plane and fly through harrowing dogfight and attack-bomber scenes.

Dynasty Wars — No, it's not about Joan Collins! Move out in the field of combat in this action game.

Capcom Bowling — Yet another entry in the popular field of bowling games. Watch out for those gutter balls!

Strider — Classic combat action is only a quarter away in this classic strategy/conflict simulator.

SNK

Street Smart — It's you vs. them in this lightning-fast game of street warfare. Practice your uppercut on



wonder where Vanna is.

Jeopardy — Test your trivia skills against the computer in this faithful reproduction of the famous TV show. Look out for the daily double!

Capcom

Willow — In this game based upon the fantasy epic,

Sega's Cyber Police E-S.W.A.T. puts the player out on the street to bottle crime as a high-tech cop with on omor suit.





Slick up your joystick it's hot!



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YOUR ROUTE, BUT BEWARE OF POLICE THAT WILL TRY TO STOP YOU IN YOUR MISSION. 360 DEGREE SPINS, AND REALISTIC 3D ROAD JUNCTIONS WILL MAKE YOU SENSE THE THRILL OF SPEED. DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD, BURN SOME RUBBER.



FIR

FACE THREE LEVELS OF SIX CONFLICTS, FROM SPORADIC WARFARE TO TOTAL WAR. NEVER LOOK BACK! IT COULD BE YOUR LAST MISSION. ONE OR

STRATEGIC PUZZLE OF EIGHTY WORLDS WITH YOUR MAGNETIC CONTROL UNIT. BUT BE CAREFULL, THE ULTRA-FAST SCROLLING HAS ALMEADY CAUSED SOME MENTAL BREAKDOWNS.

CIRCLE #145 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

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the bad guys who just happen to stroll by you.

Mechanized Attack — You're deep behind enemy lines on a commando raid in this Operation Wolf-type game. Try to blast everything that comes into your sight.

Sky Adventure — Soar through the clouds in your choice of aircraft in this new entry for flight and combat action.

Super Champion Baseball — It's your turn to step up to the plate in this detailed baseball simulator.

Gang Wars — It's vigilante justice time as you try to rescue a kidnapped girl using only your hands, feet and sheer guts.

Irem/Fabtek

XMultiply — Shades of Fantastic Voyage as you pilot your miniaturized craft into a human body to do battle with biomechanical viruses. Collect power-up modules to increase weapons.

Dragon Breed — Hop on your dragon's back for an action-packed fantasy quest game.

Dynamite Duke — You're a cybernetic commando on a mission to destroy some of the deadliest enemies the world has ever seen. Use your dynamite punch to blow them to smithereens!

Leland

All-American Football — No armchair quarterbacks allowed in



The waters under your hovercraft in Ramstar's Aqua Jack is filled with many dangers, like mines and gun-tating soldiers.

this gridiron simulator. Try your hand as coach, and lead your team onto the video field for end-zone-to-end-zone action.

Off-Road — Just like the title implies, it's a hard-driving, bone-jarring driving game. Feel



the wind in your face as you barrel over dunes and hills.

Sega

Super Monaco GP — Hear the roar of your powerful engine as you test your skill in the driver's seat. The high point of this arcade game is the PowerLink networking feature that lets players simultaneously compete head-to-head with others.

Super Masters Golf — Feel the excitement of championship golf as you play in this realistically displayed, highpressure contest.

Cyber Police E-Swat — Gather experience in street combat as you go from rookie cop to seasoned veteran, complete with a RoboCop-style fighting suit. Great graphics and sound propel this game forward at

breakneck speed through

the crime-filled suburbs.

Gottlieb

Bone Busters — This horrorthemed pinball machine features multiball, multilevel play with targets galore. Eeek!

Escape From the Planet of the Robot Monsters:

A CLOSER LOOK

by Patrick J. Kelley and Andy Eddy

Tha scanario: You'va just baan chosan to laad a daring mission. Destinction: Planat X, an industrial esteroid in deep spece. The human inhebitants of the planet have been enslevad by the avil Raptilons, who ara using these poor souls to build e massive robot army bent on the conquast of Earth. It's up to you and your partnar to fight your way through hostile robot forces, nagotiata the massiva automatad factorias of Plenet X. rescue humen slevas end dastroy all of the Reptilon bosses. While you're et it. you elso must locete the kidnepped Dr. Sarah Ballum, Earth's foramost axpart in cybernetics, before she is usad to do the bidding of the slimy elien werlords.

Sound like the plot of one of those '50s low-budget thrillers that show up on late-night TV? Maybe one of those old Republic seriels thet used to play on a Saturday afternoon at the local theatra? If you guessed either one of these, you're wrong, It's the premise for the exciting and funny new arcade game from Atari, Escapa From the Plenet of the Robot Monsters.

As you may have guessed by the baginning of this article, this is one game thet keeps tongue firmly in cheak at all times. From its specaopera pramise to its highly stylized and humorous graphics, Escape is unlike eny ercede geme to come before it.

DIE, ROBOT SCUM!

In Escepe, pleyers portrey eithar Jeka or Duka, intrapid rockat rangars. With the optionel two-pleyer mode, you and a friend can team up to do awey with tha Reptilons. After e short mission profile from your stona-facad commandar, it's off to Planet X for fun end gemes with the netives. Armed with only a etanderd-issue proton blaster and your wits, you muet take on the might of the evil Reptilon invaders end send them packing back to wherever they ceme from.

Rest assured, it won't be easy. You'll have to contend with a mazelike factory full of ell kinds of booby treps end etrenge mechinery. The Reptilon robot eoldiere weete no time in trying to snuff you out, ao you must ect feet. As you move out into the arena, the words "target-rich environment" will teke on e new meaning for you. Dozene of robots in ell ehepes end sizes will rush you in an ettempt to thwart you from completing your goal. Keep your eyes peeled end your blester erm steady: You're about to bag yourself some robots in e big way. (Anyone squeemish about the thought of robocide hed better weit outside.)

Keep in mind thet one of the objects of the geme is to destroy the robot soldiers, eo fire ewey. Both of our heroes are equipped with the seme weeponry, so it doeen't matter which you choose for your eearch-end-destroy forey.

The look of the two main charactera is one of the geme'e most humorous touches. Duke is e vintage '50s hero, complete with blond hair, e suitebly tecky costume that looks like it was torn from the dog-eered peges of Plenet Stories and a jutting squere jew. His sidekick Jake is more Jamee Deen-style cool, sporting e peir of keen Ray-Bana and e T-ehirt. He'd rether be home fixing his '57 Chevy.

GET THE LEAD OUT!

Your actual mission is to proceed through the lebyrinth of fectory screens, killing robots and freeing humen hostages es you pess. To halp you get through, you cen gether strength for your weapon by snatching the green gems thet eppeer when you tresh e robot.

THE REPTILONS HAVE ENSLAVED THE HUMANS STATIONED THERE

Eech of the levels hes e certain number of sectione thet you heve to complete before you cen pess to the next. Stay alert, though, beceuse the slaves ere easy to miss if you're in the heet of bettle with the robots. Don't forget your primary mission, which ie to free the humana. You do this by touching them, activating vour handy-dandy matter scrembler that beems them beck to your waiting rescue creft. A mispleced shot from your blester cen either toest or kill en unermed humen; eo shoot wisely! (Actually, thia "feature" is kind of neet for ell of us in the gaming world with a slightly sick eense of humor l

Speaking of humor, Escape is sprinkled with comical bits to keep you laughing. For example, if

your character wanders too close to the platform's edge, he'll find himself floeting in mideir, like Wile E. Coyote in the Roed Runner certoons. Also, running into e well will not only slow your character down, but it will leve him sheking his heed to cleer the cobweba. This is one of the funniest games you'll ever see!

Remember to keep moving along, beceuse you heve e lot of territory to cover. You can proceed to the next screen in the meze by exiting in e veriety of wevs, including ledders, switch-ectiveted esceletors end, my personel favorite, the treneporter. This last gadget never feils to get e leugh if you're seeing the game for the first time. You position your charecter on the ped end let the geme do the rest. The mode of transportetion is Rube-Goldberg-meets-Ster-Trek. You watch as your character is eucked up into en eleborete setup of glace tubing with e loud pneumatic pop. signifying he is on his wey. He stretches into e thin speghettilike strend es he is pulled up and out of the frame, eyes agog and magnified as he leaves.

As you move from screen to screen in your search for hosteges, you'll find e number of helpful items. Wall lockers contein little hydrogen bombs that can be accumulated to use egeinst the level bosses (more on this later) or to chop your way out of a thick knot of gnerly robots.

Wall lockera also contain food to replenish your cherecter's life energy or e nifty little item celled e flek shield thet protects you from all enemy attacka, hostile fire and booby treps. You'll heve to bewere of eome items, though. Sprinkled liberelly through eech fectory segment will be a number of cretes, merked only with e cryptic question mark. These may contein e number of

things, from power geme to foodstuffs to e horde of hovering killer dronerobots. A good wey to deel with this dilemma is to heve your pertner cooper-



ete with you, setting up e crossfire to blest whatever springs out at you. In later levels the threats move fast; so be prepared to shoot or die!

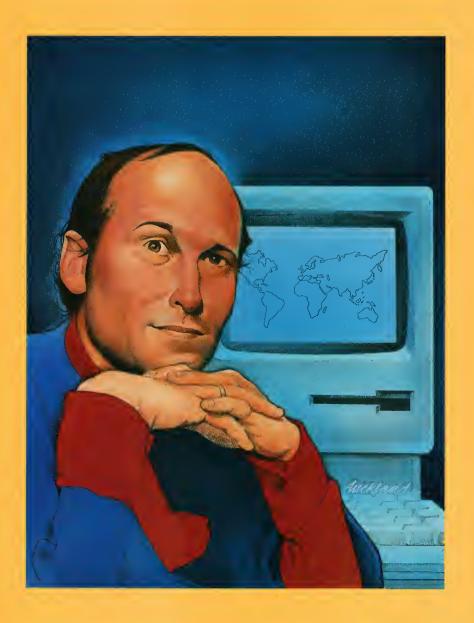
Your journey through the mazes of Plenet X elso require you to teat your eve-hand coordination at vet enother fun activity: steering the cyberslede. This occurs after clearing out a level and gives you e chence to reck up bonus lives. Your cheracter finds himself at the controls of a little space scooter-complete with vintege teil fins, of course!-that you must maneuver in, over and around the canal mazes to get to the next level. Be prepared for some high levels of stress es you wind your wey et high speed through the meze wells, only to find yourself crunching into a roadblock. Thia requires akill, dexterity end e greet memory, so don't despair if you pile up a few times.

REPTILONS AND ROBOTS

The rogue's gellery of creetures you'll encounter in Escepe is not only exciting but varied. Besides the blocky, comical robot guards, you'll do bettle with ironing-board sheped eniper droide (ell wearing pested-on scowls), leeping sentry robots, motorized drone carts and a little number that looks like something streight out of The Purple Monster Strikes Back. (Anyone out there remember thet one?)

But the nastiest creatures are the gelexy-conquering Reptilons themselvee. Hideous biomechanical creatures, these level bosses will try to roast, stomp and pummel you to keep you from your goel, the rescue of Dr. Bellum. Suffice it to say you'll learn fast how to best dispatch these groasouts, but a word to the wise: Save your bombs! Battle your way pest the Reptilons end eern the thenks of e grateful Earth—not to mention the effections of e scentily clad Sareh Bellum.

All in ell, Eeepe From the Planet of the Robot Monsters is one of the most enjoyeble, eddictive end well-crafted arcade games to come along in quite a while, end we heertily recommend you seve your querters and give this one a try. After ell, how often do you get the chence to save Earth fur only 25 cents?



CHRIS CRAWFORD

THE DESIGNER'S DESIGNER

by Bill Kunkel

In every creative field there are artists whose work is especially revered by their peers. In the world of computer gaming, Chris Crawford, the outspoken creator of games like Eastern Front (Atari), Balance of Power (Mindscape) and Siboot: Trust & Betrayal

(Mindscape), is such an artist. The impact of Crawford's work extends far beyond the individual sales of any of his titles. Each new game is studied and analyzed by other designers, anxious for insight into the creative process.

Crawford started out as a devotee of nonelectronic war games back in the '60s, and as he says, "Any avid war gamer eventually designs his own." He created several such paper games in the early '70s for his own amusement but soon came up against a pair of problems that bogged down the process.

"One was the math," he explains. "I was using high-powered, clumsy stuff from my physics background. The other was the fact that the gamer could see the entire board. By 1975, I concluded that what we needed was a computer."

Then came the May '74 issue of Popular Electronics, which discussed the MITS Altair computer. "That article was really the

beginning for everybody," he notes, adding that for the next two years he began to make use of his teaching position to gain access to the school's IBM 1130. Eventually, in January of 1977, Crawford purchased his own computer—in kit form—and taught himself

how to use it. "I wanted to do neat games, but back then you did all your programming in machine code—not even assembly. I taught myself everything, from soldering to building circuit boards. I built my own computer and taught myself to program on it so I could [write] games."

He soon had a pair of computer war games, which he began showing at conventions as early as 1977. Later that year, Commodore released the Pet, and by late 1978, Chris had sold his first computer war game, the classic *Tankhis*; (Avalon Hill). "The ver-

sion Avalon Hill published was actually the *fourth* version of the game. I had originally done it on the IBM 1130, then on my own computer, then on the Pet and finally the version AH published."

Following the success of *Tanktics*, AH also purchased *Legionnaire* from Crawford, but at this point he still considered the whole thing to be "just a hobby." He marks the start of his professional life with



his hiring by Atari in 1979, where he produced an unpublished game for the 2600 and a pair of early classics for the Atarolova computer, Energy Czar and Scram!, the latter a China Syndrome-type simulation of running a nuclear reactor.

BROTHER CHRIS SPREADS THE WORD!

Crawford was then promoted to head up the "original evangelist group," the Software Development Support Group. Crawford recalls, "In December of 1980 I went around and sold the idea of designing games on the Atari to developers. I did my little dog-and-pony show, demonstrating all the neat things the Atari could do, and a year later, a lot of Atari software began appearing." In fact, the entire process of sending out speakers to proselytize for a

particular computer system, as practiced by companies like Apple in later years, was based on Crawford's early work for Atari. "I invented it," he says, without false modesty.

Like most fans of the first Atari computer, Chris is some-

what bitter at its failure in the marketplace and tells a fascinating story of how it happened: "In the spring of '83, the computer price wars began. At that time, the cost of a [typical computer] was \$1,000. Shortly thereafter, companies like Texas Instruments, Commodore and Atari began lowering the prices down to \$400. Atari then decided to move all its production facilities loutside the United Statesl and shut down all its domestic factories in August of '83." Alas, the Hong Kong factory, which was supposed to go immediately into operation in order to pick up the slack, had start-up problems and didn't come online until October, Christmas '83-the biggest selling season the industry had ever seen-came and went with only Commodore products on the shelves, establishing the C-64 as the dominant home-entertainment machine and sentencing the Atari 400/800 series to a future as landfill.

But before the Atari infrastructure collapsed on him, Crawford produced a pair of classic games for the doomed computer, the ground-breaking Eastern Front 1941 and the almost unseen Excalibur. Crawford's regret over the unfair fate of Excalibur, "one of my most noble works," remains with him to this day.

During this period, Crawford also penned *The Art of Computer Game Design*, a book that solidified his reputation among designers and programmers and that, in turn, led to his publishing a regular magazine for the game-design community, the influential Journal of Computer Game Design.

AT THE COMPUTER CROSSROADS

The collapse of Atari left Crawford at a crossroads: Should he move on to the Apple Macintosh as his primary development system or go with the sexier new Amiga? "I hemmed and hawed and eventually decided that the Mac would do to the Amiga what the Apple had done to the Atari." Even with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight, Crawford remains happy with the outcome of his decision.

On the Mac, Crawford staked out new ground with games like Patton vs. Rommel

(Electronic Arts), Siboot: Trust and Betrayal and the enormously successful Balance of Power. He has already completed his next work, Guns and Butter, a war game within a macroeconomics simulation that



begins in pre-Industrial Revolution days and moves to the present day. "You're trying to conquer the world through macroeconomics," Crawford explains. "To conquer the world you need to build bigger armics, but to do this you also need factories. Factories, in turn, require things like diesel engines, petroleum, high-grade steel and ball bearings. To make ball bearings you need steel and heavy metals. And, of course, you always need workers.

"Larger technology requires a large population base—you might have 10,000 people making ball bearings alone. In order to grow your population, you need agricultural surpluses, which means you have to produce agricultural implements. Labor must then be allocated between the military and farming; that is, guns or butter?" The game also features a diplomatic section in which alliances can be made, and as Crawford says, "The little guys can gang up on the big guy."

Guns and Butter comes on the heels of one of Crawford's disappointments, the commercial failure of his ambitious Siboot: Trust & Betrayal. "Originally," he explains, "I wanted to do a game in which you talked to characters. No one had ever really done that in a game. Oh, there's lots of fake dialogue—like Floyd the Robot in those Infocom games. Everybody loved Floyd, but he was a real Potemkin village of a character. If

CRAWFORD SEZ...

IN RATING THE QUALITIES THAT MAKE A COOD GAME, CHRIS CRAWFORD KNOWS WHAT COMES FIRST. "INTERACTION. HOW DEP AND RICH IS THE INTERACTION." IVE BEIN QUITE OUTSPOKEN ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT I FEEL THERE IS FAR TOO MUCH EMPILASS ON COSMITICS. GRAPHICS AND SOUND ARE VERY IMPORTANT, PERHAPS CRUCAL, BUT THEY ARE THE MEANS TO AN END, AND THAT END IS INTERACTION. WHERE WE MOST OFTEN FAIL IS IN PROCESSING USER INPUT AND PRODUCTION AN INTERESTING RESPONSE. THE COMPUTER SHOULD THINK IT OVER, PROCESS THE DATA AND OFFER INTERESTING REACTIONS. THAT'S WHERE I SWAT THE MOST. A GREAT CAME PROVINCES THAT INTERPACTION."

CRAWFORD CITES THE CLASSIC BUNTEN BROTH-ERAMPLES OF SUCH CAMES, OF HIS OWN CRE-ATIONS, HE RATES BALANCE OF POWER, SIBOOT. TRUST & BETRAYAL AND EXCAUSUR AS THE GAMES HAIL CAME CLOSEST TO THIS IDEA.

SOFTWARE, HOWEVER, IS INEVITABLY LIMITED BY THE HARDWARE ON WHICH IT RUNS. HOW DOES CRAWFORD SEE THE VARIOUS HARDWARE PLAYERS? "WELL, THERE'S THE IBM PC UNIVERSE, OF COURSE, AND THE UPSIDE IS THAT THE PRICES HAVE REALLY COME DOWN AND ARE PRETTY GOOD RIGHT NOW. THE DOWNSIDE IS THAT THE MACHINES ARE UNUSABLE." HE NOTES THE COMPUTER'S ARCHITEC-TURE, REQUIRING USERS TO PERFORM THE EQUIVA-LENT OF OPEN-HEART SURGERY WITH THE ADDITION OF EVEN THE MOST INSIGNIFICANT PERIPHERAL AS ANOTHER PROBLEM AND NOTES THAT THIS SUPPOS-EDLY "COMPATIBLE" UNIVERSE OPERATES UNDER A WIDE VARIETY OF SPECS. THE MEGAHERTZ, GRAPH-ICS, SOUND BOARDS AND MEMORY CAN VARY ASTONISHINGLY FROM ONE MS-DOS MACHINE TO ANOTHER.

CRAWFORD FEELS THE APPLE MACINITOSH COULD BE THE MACHINITE THAT BRIAKS THROUGH TO THE MASS MARKET, BUT ONE PROBLEM IS THAT "APPLE IS JUST SO DAMNED GREEDY. THEY'VE GOT A MONSTROUS MARGIN—THEY COULD SELL A MACH FOR \$1,000 AND STILL MAKE A PROFIT. APPLE JUST DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE HOME MARKET. THE APPLE IJ IS ALL BUT DEAD, AND THE BUSNESS MARKET APPEARS TO BE SATURATED. APPLE IS NOT POSITIONED WELL RIGHT NOW."

THEN THERE'S THE AMIGA. "EVERYBODY WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE AMIGA SUCCEED, AND EVERYBODY KNOWS IT WON'T."

BEFORE LEAVING, I HAD TO ASK CRAWFORD IF HE EVER SITS DOWN AND PLAYS AN ARCADE SHOOT-OUT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE DID "OCCASIONALLY," BUT WITHOUT GREAT ENTHUSIASM. WHEN ASKED IF HE FEIT ACTION GAMES WOULD REMAIN THE DOMINANT GENRE OF COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, HE BRISTLED. "ABSOLUTELY NOT. ONE DAY, THE SKILL-AND-ACTION GAME WILL PLAY THE SAME ROLE AS COMIC BOOKS DO TO LITERATURE." REFLECTING A SECOND, HE ADDED: "THE ANALOGY IS ACTUALLY VERY TIGHT. WE [SOFTWARE CREATORS] MUST LEARN TO BE AUTHORS, NOT COMIC—BOOK WRITES."

you told Floyd: 'Floyd, you are as ugly as sin,' he couldn't respond to you. It was a fixed script. I wanted a game where you could talk to other characters, and they would think about what you said and respond to it."

The game failed to survive in the marketplace, and Crawford analyzed that failure in some detail, assigning blame both externally and internally. "There are several reasons why this game failed. Working backward, let's start with the consumer. The consumer can be very hard to deal with. They're tired of sequels, and if you give them too many, they'll walk away from your business. However, they are also extremely conservative and won't leap at a new product. What they really want is a game just like the one they enjoyed yesterday, only better."

Crawford also tosses brief criticism at
"the distributor and, to a lesser extent, the
publisher" before getting down to selfanalysis. "The game was completely alien.
It was set on an alien world where alien
characters were speaking an alien language. The goal was alien, and it just
demanded too much of the audience. An
associate urged me to make the characters
wizards who were casting spells, but I
refused. In retrospect, maybe that would
have helped.

"Also, graphically, it was very dull. The graphics were just too thin. I simply bit off more than I could chew. I spent 13 months on this game, and it really needed 18 months for something this radical. It was insufficiently polished."

A NEW CROSSROADS

Much as he stood at the crossroads after the collapse of Atari, Crawford now sees both himself and the entertainment-software industry at a new crossroads. For the industry, Crawford sees potential lean times ahead. "We're asking consumers for \$30, \$40 or \$50, based on the thinnest possible promise. If you're thinking about going to the movies, you can watch the review shows or read the magazines and newspapers; I almost never go to a movie 'blind.' Computer games have a very weak review cycle. Most appear in specialty magazines," which he feels are suspect because of their dependence upon the goodwill of the hardware manufacturer. In short, we "aren't giving consumers reliable information."

"The second problem," says Crawford,
"is that we keep screwing the consumer. If
you buy your software on an eenie-meenieminey-moe basis—and many consumers are
reduced to that—you run a very high risk of
getting burned.

"Ultimately, [we in the industry must



Receive Top Dollars

As Low As Stor Your Used Nintendo Games

	ITLE OF GAME	WE PAT TOU	WE SELL YOU	TITLE OF GAME	WE PAT TOU	WE SELL TOU	TITLE OF GAME	WE PAY TOU	AON SEFF ME	TITLE OF GAME	WE PAT TOU	WE SELL
	Yard Fight	\$10	219	Or. Choos	\$16	528	Mogracy	514	527	Solomons Key	\$15	\$29
	7 iara rigni 742	10	19	Ouck Hunt	10	29	Moj La Baseball	10	23	Speed Rumblers	10	19
	943	14	23	Elev. Action	14	2B	Marbei Madness	16	25	Spelunker	10	19
	dv. Bayou Billy	15	27	Empire City	17		Moppy Land	15	25	5py Hunter	10	19
	dventure Island	15	27	Excitabile	10	19	Morio Bros.	15	28	Spy vs Spy	13	22
	dv. of Lola	14	27	Faxonadu	18	32	Morvels Xmen	20	35	Spoon	15	29
	dv. Tom Sowyer	16	32	Fighting Golf LT	15	28	Mego Mon	20	34	Star Force	10	19
	igina Proph.	18	27	Fist/North Star	18	3B	Mega Man II	22	33	Stor Force II	20	32
	ir Fortress	25	35	Flying Oragon I	20	39	Metal Gear	10	19	Stor Soldier	15	28
	irwalf	16	27	Freedom Force	12	24	Metroid	20	34	Stor Voyager	10	19
	taha Mission	10	19	Friday the 13th	15	28	Mickey Mouse	12	23	Stinger	10	19
	magen	17	2B	Galaga	12	24	Mahry Bmb Jack	10	19	Street Cop	18	34
	nticipation	14	25	Gountlet	12	24	Millipede	12	23	Strider	1B	28
	rkanaid	35	60	Ghost & Gablins	10	19	Milons Sec Castl	15	2B	Super Dodge Ball	18	28
Ä	thena	10	19	Ghost Busters	12	19	Mission XX	16	2B	Supermon	1B	28
В	ock to Future	16	32	Golf	10	19	Muscle	10	19	Super Maria I	10	19
В	od Oudes	20	39	Golf Pebble Bch	12	21	Mystery Quest	16	2B	Super Maria II	20	29
В	od Str Browl	20	39	Golgo 13	12	19	Natl football La	18	28	Super Pitfall	16	28
В	allaon Flight	10	19	Goonies II	12	29	Nightmare Eim St	21	32	Super Sprint	16	28
В	oseboll	10	19	Gatcha	10	19	Ninja Gaiden	21	32	Super Stor Force	16	27
8	aseball Stors	16	32	Gradius	10	19	Ninja Kid	10	19	Super Xevious	16	27
	oseslooded	14	25	Grand Prix	16	27	Ninjo Toro	16	27	Taboo 6th Sense	16	27
В	attlefield Nop.	20	37	Guardian Legend	15	29	Nobur. Ambition	20	3B	Tag Team Wresti		21
В	ionic Cammando	14	25	Guerilla Wor	16	29	Operation Walf	15	27	Tecma Baseball	16	28
В	lock Tiger	22	39	Gum Shoe	12	21	Othello	10	19	Tennis	10	19
	lodes of Steel	15	24	Gunsmoke	12	19	Pocmon	10	19	Terminotor	16	28
	aster Master	15	24	Gyruss	12	21	Poper Boy	16	27	Terra Cresto	1B	32
	omber Man	15	28	Heavy Barrel	18	28	Password	18	28	Tetris	20	39
	neakthru	12	24	Hector Vector	1B	2B	Pinball	10	19	Thunderblade	14	25
В	ubble Bobble	12	24	Hogans Alley	10	19	Plotoon	10	19	Thundercode	16	27
	ugs Bunny	14	28	Hallywood Spgs.	16	28	Popeye	20	35	Tiger Heli	10	19
	ump and Jump	10	24	Hoops	15	27	Predator	20	39	Titan Worrior	16	27
	urger Time	10	19	Hydlide	16	2B	Price is Right	21	32	TMNT	25	38
	olif. Gomes	15	28	Ice Climber	10	21	Pro-Am Rocing	10	19	Top Gun	10	19
	aracresta	20	37	Ice Hockey	10	21	Pro Wrestling	10	19	Touchdown	16	27
	astlequest	1B	36	Ikari Warriers	10	19	Punch Out	10	22	Touchdown Fever	16	27
	astlevanio	10	2B	Ikari Warriars II	10	23	Q-Bert	10	19	Town & Country	10	19
	astlevania II	12	24	Indiana Jones	16	28	Rocket Attack	15	27	Trock & Field	10	19
	hester Field	1B	36	Iron Tonk	14	23	Rod Rocer	14	28	Track & Field II	16	27
	hubby Cherub	15	28	Jackal	10	19	Roid Bungl, Boy		19	Trojon	10	19
	ity Connection	12	24	Jaws	10	19	Romba	10	19	Ultima	24	39
	lu Clu Land	12	24	Jeopardy	16	2B	Rompage	16	2B	Urban Champion	10	19
	obro Command	15	28 32	Jeopardy Jr. John E. Otrback	1B 14	34 24	RBI Boseball	10 16	24 27	US Galf	16 22	27
	obra Triaagle	10	19	Jordon vs. Bird	16	29	Renegode	10	2/	Vegas Oream	16	27
	ommanda ontra	12	24	Jorgan vs. bira	10	19	Ring King	1B	29	Vindicotors Volleyball	10	22
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	ycle Shooting	18	36	Korote Champ Korote Kid	10	19	Robo Cop	21 16	27	Wheel/Fortune Wild Gunmon	16	1B
	ic Jekyll/Hyde	10	36 28	Korony	14	2B	Roba Warriors	21	32	Willow	16	IB
	eadly Towers	15	28 28		20	2B 34	Rager Rabbit	20	34	Winter Gomes	10	19
	efender II		28	Kid Icarus Kid Kool	18	32	Rallerball Rush 'N Attack	10	19	Winter Games Winards/Warriors		23
	lesert Command	20	32	Kid Niki		25		10	19	World Games	12	23
	efender/Crown ino Riki	16	32	Kung Fu	15 10	19	Rygor Secret Costle	16	34	World Runner	10	19
		10	24	Kung Fu II	20	32	Secret Costle Section Z	10	19	Wrecking Crew	10	19
	onkey Kong	10	24	Kung Fu Heroes	14	24		15	27	Wrestlemania	16	29
	onkey Kong Jr.	12	24	Legocy/Wizord	14	28	Seigne Str 123	10	19	Xonophabe	10	19
	inky Kg Jr Math	12	24		10	19	Sesome Str 123		19	Xevious	10	19
	onkey Kong 3	12	24	Legend of Kage	10	19	Side Pocket	50	95	Zonac	10	19
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	ouble Dribble	12	24	Lode Runner	10	18	Skate Ur Die Sky Kid	12	27	Zelda II	20	32
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realize that we are issuing] an implicit warrantee when we put a game on the shelves that that game is worth buying and playing."

Crawford also believes the publishers are "shooting themselves in the foot by putting their names ahead of the authors." Computer games are still sold almost exclusively on the basis of which company published it. The lunacy of this approach becomes even more obvious when an analogy is made with any other entertainment industry. Can you imagine going to a movie based solely on the fact that Warner Brothers is releasing it? Or buying a book just because Bantam published it or a rock CD because Atlantic recorded it? "The publishers want to hog it all [the credit], and it only decreases consumer confidence."

Crawford also tags economic realities as the cause for much of the publishers wees. "Publishers aren't willing to pay for good product. There are too many amateurs, too much [major software] being produced by first-time operators. The best way to do games is to identify who the pros are, then go to them and offer them major money to produce quality games. Instead, the publishers think, We could save \$20,000 by going with the kid out of college. They are still too willing to take chances based on price. They're still too interested in cutting cute deals."

Citing much of the European software flooding U.S. shelves ("It's bought primarily because it's cheap, not because it's good") as an example, Crawford sees a "very destructive trend developing. [Publishers] are piling up mountains of garbage, and the odds are the consumer will pick the wrong box. We may have abused consumers too often.

"I think this Christmas is very iffy, and these companies all live for Christmas. A lot of [computer] people are worried about Nintendo, but I'm not. [The NES] is a video game, not a computer. Retailers are clogged with product. 1990 could be a period of contraction; a lot of people will move out of the industry. But it'll be short-lived. We'll come back."

Crawford offers an intriguing solution to the problem of poor software. He feels there should be a clear system of demarcation within the software industry, likening it to the various strata of baseball life: the bush, minor and major leagues. A designer or programmer would test his wings at the lower-paying "bush league" publishers, much like novice movie directors start out at low-budget film factories before getting a shot at the big time. Eventually, once a creator has proved him or herself, he can move up to the next level.

Much like the industry he's been a part

of for over a decade. Chris Crawford also stands at a pivotal point in his artistic development. A lone wolf in an age of specialization, even he wonders how long he will be able to maintain his auteur-like control over game projects. "It's one of my major dilemmas. I realize it is much more difficult for a lone wolf, but I find it difficult to collaborate. I'm very hard on my collaborators; I'm impatient. I just don't collaborate well, On my new project, Voice of the Planet, I'm working with Amanda Goodenough. I'm the senior author, however, and she functions as a critic, junior author and creates the artwork. I'm improving my techniques. I'm getting better at subcontracting my projects.

"Of course, one of the things that makes it easier for me is that the tools are getting so much better. Sound effects, for example, used to be very difficult to do. Now, you buy a digitizer and a microphone.

"I do hire artists; basically, I give them boxes and tell them to fill the boxes with whatever pictures.

"Another thing on my side is the cyclical nature of this business. In rough times, [specialty] groups are expensive. If there are real cash-flow problems, I can tighten my belt very easily. I've seen these boom-and-bust cycles before; next spring, I'll be there."



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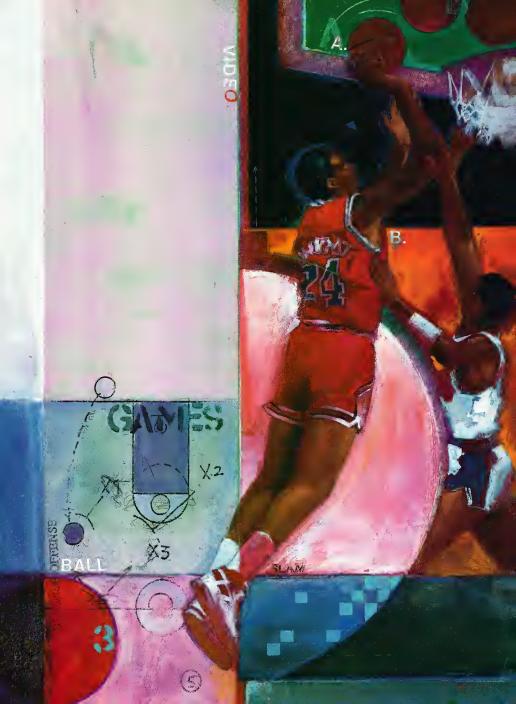
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ROUNDBALL SOFTWARE!

by Bill Kunkel and Arnie Katz

The
Latest in
Computerized
Basketball

Inling one's ear to the ground is an old American Indian technique for predicting the future. An ear pressed tightly against the hard earth will pick up vibrations from miles away, and

a skilled listener could profile an approaching war party right down to their arrowheads.

When a game writer puts his ear to the ground these days in



The two TV commentators in SportTime's OmniPlay Basketball highlight the fast-paced action.

hopes of predicting future trends, one sound drowns out everything else: the relentless thump, thump, thump of a basketball dribbling on a hardwood floor. It seems that almost every major software publisher simultaneously decided the

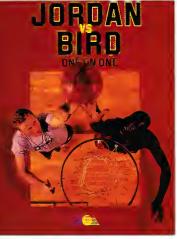
time was ripe for an ambitious basketball simulation: Electronic Arts, Cinemaware, SportTime/Broderbund and

Mastertronic have already released roundball re-creations, with Season

Ticket/Data East and others soon to follow.

Do You Believe in Magic?

On the IBM,
Mastetttonic broke upcoutt
fitst with Magic Johnson's
Basketball, a home version of
the coin-op hit, Magic Johnson's Fast
Break Basketball. The original design





Larry Bird and Michael Jordan, two of the NBA's biggest stars, face off in the gym and now on your home computer in Electronic Arts' Jordan vs. Bird Go One-on-One.

by Sculptured Software has been recreated by Synergistic Software, complete with a horizontally-scrolling, angled side view and an arcade-style control system. *Magic Johnson's Basketball* isn't intended to be a purist's roundball simulation, but rathet it fits the bill as an accessible, joystickdriven action game.

The game boasts several intet-

esting features in addition to the colorful visuals. Users are offeted three difficulty levels and fout play modes: oneor two-player action, computer vs. computer and training. The training option allows the user to work on individual aspects of his ot her game, including shot blocking, passing, shooting and stealing. There are offensive (chatging) and defensive (hacking) fouls and a 24second shot clock. If the user can beat the computer team in the solitaire mode, a bonus phase, dubbed "The Magic Show," is initiated.

"The Magic Show" is a half-court contest in which the user goes one-onone with Earvin J. himself in the ultimate test of arcade b-ball skill.

Magic Johnson's Basketball is available on the C-64, IBM PC and in two Amiga formats. Systems with 512K or less will run one vetsion, while more powerful one-meg Amigas can actually play what Mastertronic calls its "Mega-Game"—that is, the exact same game that appeared in atcades.

NES hoopsters will also have their shot at the Magic man in Tradewest's vetsion of the same game. Magic Johnson's Fast Break gives your controller a good workout, testing your shooting and passing abilities against either the NES of another player. Should your confidence falter, Magic will show up with some helpful words of advice to boost your morale.

ALL-STAR CARTRIDGE FARE

Vic Tokai, bettet known fot its highly popular Golgo 13, Top Secret Episode spy game, is the most teeent entry into the world of basketball simulations with its All Pro Basketball cartridge for the NES. Though the teams are fictional, All Pro Basketball lets you coach your video team much as you would any other. Fot example, you can plan a lineup with yout tallest shooters and replace tiring playets during a game with fresh bench tidets. There is even a halftime show by the local cheerleadets.

Though it's been out awhile longet, Jaleco's *Hoops* (reviewed in VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, August 1989) is still stealing the limelight. Bypassing the full-court format for the scrappier, playground-type half- court contest, *Hoops* still has many of the same elements that thrill sports fans. In particular, there is a rostet of talented players with different strengths, making each game experience unique.

OMNIPLAYING

On the Amiga, SportTime's OmniPlay Basketball got the advantage of the fast break in this latest wave of b-ball-mania. Patt of the OmniPlay series, OmniPlay Basketball uses the same cellular format to provide detailed coverage of every aspect of the sport.

SportTime's Ed Ringlet is the man behind the revolution-

ary OMNI (Options





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Manager aNd Installer) system, which





Electronic Arts' Jordan vs. Bird One-on-One has the versatility of multiple play selection and the excitement of head-tohead competition, a variety of b-ball thet is played on blacktopped playground courts across the country.

breaks down a simulation into a series of modules, some of which are included with the basic game package, while others can be purchased on an optional basis, OmniPlay Basketball includes the Master Control program, which allows the user to access all modules including the SBA League module for league play and the End-View game module, which provides the game's visual presentation. Additional modules include Pro, College and Fantasy leagues, the Side-View game and a Print Utility. The Fantasy League program allows users to play general manager and create their own dream teams, while the Side-View module permits users to observe the action from a side perspective. The Print Utility produces hard copy on all stats and records.

The basic structure of the SBA (SportTime Basketball Association)

module will be familiar to fans of the Sport Time games: It uses the now-classic league format with team histories, injuries, trading points and playoffs. Players mature, enjoy their peak and then begin their inexorable decline. GMs must work hard to keep their teams at peak efficiency, making trades, recruiting new stars and sending recalcitrants to training camp.

Similarly, the game system employs all the most successful elements from past SportTime team-game simulations, with the user acting as player, coach or both through a combination of on-screen player control via joystick and a coach's strategy screen. Offensive coaching options include: hit the boards, protect fast break (play-

ers stay back after the shot to prevent the other team from immediately breaking out), work inside, normal and work outside. In games where the user is acting

Gemestar's GBA
Basketball: Two-on-Two,
ona of the earliest
entries in the growing
baskatball simulation
merkat, opened up various strategies regarding
game play and introduced the end-view perspective, e viewpoint
thet has been adapted
by many others.

exclusively as a coach, additional strategic options include: working the clock (when the user's team is way ahead), quick shot (when the user's team is far behind) and mix (a style combining both run-and-gun and deliberate offense to keep the opposition off-balance). Defensive options are: hit the boards, foul, set up fast break, expect inside, expect outside, attempt steal, normal, man-to-man, double team and mix. Coaches can make substitutions after viewing the stats of any team member. There is also a full substitution capability.

One of OmniPlay Basketball's most innovating features is the play mechanic used in the End-View game. Instead of the traditional system, in which the user directly controls the player with the ball while all other players are guided by the computer (a play system that is available in the forthcoming Side-View module), the End-View game uses a system called "Flow Control" to direct on-court activity. In this new system, rather than controlling a single player, the user guides the flow of the game by issuing periodic "instructions," via the joystick, to the entire team. These instructions cover everything from passing and shooting, on offense, to double-teaming and shotblocking on "D."

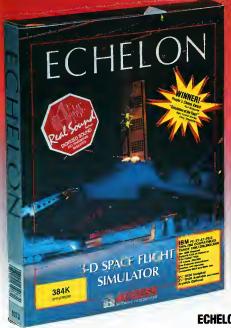
OmniPlay features fouls, free throws, overtime, a shot clock and numerous other features that enhance



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the simulation's verisimilitude. At the end of each game, full game stats appear and can be printed out via the Print Utility module.

In addition to the nuts and bolts, OmniPlay Basketball offers plenty of frills, including "The Nick and Bob Shows," in which a pair of TV sports





SportTime's OmniPlay Basketball offers a lot of off-court ection in addition to the highquality, and-view perspective of the game.

reporters recap and comment on the ongoing action. Initially available on the Amiga, with all modules promised by the middle of 1990, *OmniPlay Basketball* is also available on the C-64 and IBM, though the support modules for the IBM version are not immediately scheduled. The entire line will be supported by the *Video League News*, *OmniPlay*'s official newsletter.

NBA MEETS EA

Electronic Arts' Lakers vs. Celtics has several unique and appealing features that should serve it well in the software play-offs. First off, of all the new b-ball simulations, only Lakers vs. Celtics has a full NBA license (Magic Johnson's Basketball licensed only Magic). All the teams and stars are here, with the original game package including all eight of last year's playoff teams, in addition to East-West All-Star teams.

As with OmniPlay, Lakers vs. Celtics is an action-strategy game with a heavy strategic component and an emphasis on hot visuals. Each player comes with complete statistics and skill ratings that include his ball handling and shooting abilities, as well as speed and height.

The game's most immediately appealing feature, however, is its amazing graphics. Players like Kareem, Michael Jordan and Larry Bird are all instantly recognizable as they move up and down court in this side-view simulation. Players are coded according to everything from race to jersey num-

bers and size (the taller players are actually discernable on-screen), creating a marvelous sense of realism. Even more amazing, the game will be initially released for

IBM and compatibles, but even the Tandy graphics are astonishing.

Lakers vs. Celtics also boasts some impressive artificial intelligence in its programming that will help onscreen players act and react in a manner consistent with their prototypes. Even team personalities will be observable, since tactic tendencies like the fast break have been programmed into the action.

THE CINEMATIC TOUCH

The bells and whistles are ringing and blowing at maximum volume when Ginemaware releases a new game, and TV Sports: Basketball should be no exception. This second entry in the TV Sports series (following TV Sports: Football) once again combines statistical and strategic realism with state-of-the-art graphics to create an amazingly vivid roundball simulation with all the trappings of a network TV broadcast.

TV Sports: Basketball is a five-onfive action-strategy simulation in which players are rated in a variety of categories including height, speed, jumping ability and ballhandling skills. The user can create his or her own team by allocating a fixed amount of skill points over the entire team—the starting five and a twelve-player bench.

The user has direct joystick control over the player with the ball and can dribble, pass and shoot. The success of any given shot is determined by a number of factors relative to the skill of both the user and the on-screen players, among them the height and skill of the shooter and any defender(s), as well as the point in the player's jump when the user chooses to release the ball. On defense, players can block, steal or even force the ball carrier to pick up his dribble or slide his body between the defender and the ball.

TV Sports: Basketball was designed in such a way that even the hottest joystick wizards won't be able to pave their way to success on the basis of

In today's electronic basketball, game strategy and player matchups are important.

hand-eye coordination alone. While arcade skill will definitely enhance one's performance, an understanding of game strategy and how to achieve desirable matchups can be even more important.

The game's visual presentation harkens back to TV Sports: Football, with an elevated end-view perspective and a briefly appearing side-perspective transition screen. The program also includes the numerous mediatype touches standard to this series, including sportscasters, interviews and sexy cheerleaders.

There are also several visual-play cues and status indicators. During sideline strategy sessions, for example, a player's posture (standing, leaning or

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State Mail to: Sunsoft, P.O. Box 2390, Libertyville, IL. 60198 kneeling) indicates his physical condition. Players also give subtle cues just before breaking for the basket and will physically turn away from a defender when under pressure.

Users can opt for the full 82-game season or try a shorter schedule, and the program prints out hard copy on all stats. At press time, Cinemaware was also looking to include several extra features, including a four-player mode on the Amiga using a new peripheral that doubles existing input slots and a

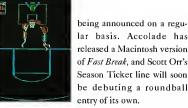
system for selecting all-star teams based on performance within the simulation.

TV Sports: Basketball will initially appear on the Amiga, with an IBM PC version to be released

approximately 60 to 90 days later and an Atari ST version soon thereafter.

MORE TO COME!

In addition to these basketball contests, new programs are turning up or



Team roundball has finally arrived on computer. After years of one-on-one action, basketball, with all its strategic nuances and visual flash, has finally established itself as a major sports simulation category.

A Brief History of ELECTRONIC BASKETBALL

asketball games have been a strong category of electronic gaming ever since the advent of programmable video-game systems in the late '70s. The earliest roundball re-creations, on systems like the Atari 2600 and Magnavox Odyssey2, were invariably one-on-one, side-perspective contests. Team basketball was first introduced by the Intellivision with Mattel's NBA Basketball. This game introduced the play system that is preferred by most designers to this day: the user controls one player at a time (on offense, the ball-carrier) while the computer manipulates the rest of the team.

Similar team basketball games, including Atari's revamped RealSports Basketball for the 2600, were soon made available to video gamers, and team roundball has remained a viable video-game category to this day, with titles like

Double Dribble (Konami) and Hoops (Jaleco) setting the current standard.

ON THE COMPUTER

The first major computer basketball game, Julius Erving and Larry Bird Go One-on-One (Electronic Arts), reverted to the old two-player format of the early video games, but maximized the genre's potential. This was accomplished by offering players that were skillfully crafted computerized re-creations of the two titular b-ball superstars. The on-screen Larry Bird and Dr. J ran, jumped and shot just the real thing. Additional visual frills, like the periodic dunk that smashes the glass backboard and the laconic janitor who sweeps up the mess. have since becomes staples of the genre.

The next step forward came from Gamestar's GBA Basketball: Two-on-Two. This game doubled the size

of the on-court teams (to two) and opened up the various strategies associated with passing. This game also introduced the end-view perspective (In which the player is directly facing the net and backboard) and the transition screen (to indicate that the action has moved to the other court), which has since been adapted for use in games like Cinemaware's TV Sports: Basketball.

Steve Cartwright's Fast Break (Accolade) further elaborated upon the team idea by introducing threeman squads, while EA's disappointing Jordan vs. Bird attempted to reprise the classic One-on-One format with Michael "Air" Jordan standing in for Julius Erving.

ROUNDBALL BY THE NUMBERS
Another category of basketball simulation is the statistical replay, as represented by Lance Haffner's Final
Four and Software

Simulation's Pure-Stat College Basketball (both of which simulate NCAA type roundball) and NBA (Avalon Hill). These games employ player ratings and statistics to determine results, in lieu of arcadestyle joystick manipulation. Users act exclusively as coaches, setting lineups and dictating strategy using real teams and real players, then sit back and watch the action unfold.

Final Four is a text-only program, while P-S College Basketball and NBA offer animated graphics of each play sequence.

Team basketball has made slow and steady progress on home computers, adding one player at a time, until we have now reached the point where five-on-five action-strategy contests are the industry standard. One can only guess what the next generation of b-ball simulations will offer.







Puzzling It Out

Games for Thinkers

by Joyce Worley







Puzzles have played an important part in computer-gaming history from the first days of the brain machines. The earliest computer operators tested the entertainment potential of the monster micros with simple code-solving routines, letter-substitution and number-rearranging games. Lacking graphics, these were primarily intellec-

> tual curiosities passed

mainframer

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from one



Mindscape's Crossword Magic

labs.

Once the mainframers developed the ability to manipulate images onscreen, the computer field broke wide open. Suddenly the graphic image was king, but the coronation was a little premature. Although new products introduced a level of excitement and participation that gamers had never before experienced, most early graphic games weren't actually very good, judged by today's artistic standards. Those early days of compu-gaming



Accolade's Mental Blocks

were dominated by hokey action games with poor graphics and low resolution. By comparison, the computer puzzles, in which the graphics were merely decoration for already successful gaming modes, seemed slick and sophisticated.

In the early '80s, computer puzzles were a small but highly significant section of the entertainment-software market. Designers specialized in adding computer opponents, player aids and enhancements that made puzzle gaming easier and more pleasant while sticking fairly close to the established modes. But this phase



didn't last long. Creativity reared her beautiful head and designers started playing with traditional concepts, making changes that were flatly impossible before computers entered the picture.

Traditional Games On-Screen

Spinnaker's Word Challenge typified the best of the puzzler's art in the early '80s. The computer generated a 4 x 4 or 5 x 5 grid of letters, and the gamer scored on the number of words formed from adjoining letters. This simple premise, obviously based on Parker Brothers' nonelectronic game Boggle, was enhanced to a fare-theewell with every option and device the programmers could come up with. Players could alter background colors, grid size, time limit and scoring methods. The program also came with a smarter-than-smart opponent, "Lexis," whose depth-of-search could be limited by the user.

CBS Software produced several puzzle games during the period, mostly intended for educational use, but they caught on with gamers. Wordfinder challenged one or two contestants to find words hidden within one of 24 key words; it also worked as a vocabulary builder, since players had to know

definitions to get bonus points.

Word games were not the only puzzle challengers. Springboard Software's Puzzle Master had 40 or 50 computer paintings on disk to be sliced up into as few as two or as many as 800 pieces, jumbled, then reassembled, jigsaw-style. Not quite as satisfying as regular puzzles because of the sameness of the piece shapes, it nonetheless provided a pleasant play experience that was greatly enhanced by the glowing colors of the art on-screen.

Unlikely as it may seem on the face of it, manual puzzles also came to the fore in the early '80s. One example was Jeff Gold's Rubik's Cube Unlocked, published in 1981 by Double-Gold Software. The computer generated a 3-D view of the cube that could be manipulated on-screen to bring other faces into view. The computer even gave hints when the "cuber" got stuck.

Creativity Comes to Puzzling

Traditional puzzle forms, like the examples above, continued to delight home gamers. Their ease of play made pencil and paper obsolete. But they were, in essence, exactly the same as their low-tech ancestors. This was not true of the variants that started popping up during the first trimester of the decade. First they added a lot of tricks and fizzle to traditional games, then went a step further

Miles Computing's Puzzle Gallery with the At the Carnival module



to create new puzzle forms.

Compuzzler, from Uptown Software, a now-defunct company, was a good example of just how far from the original a computer game could stray. Loosely based on a crossword puzzle, the game let up to four people decipher clues to fill spaces in the 70 crosswords on disk as they battled for puzzle-board territory. Each player started in one corner of the grid and completed words outward from that point, using only squares branching



Miles Computing's The Fool's Errand

off spaces that they had already filled themself. The object was to spread a network of words over the widest territory possible, until one player's color dominated the board.

At the same time, Mindscape's Crassword Magic (still available for Apple computers) provided the templates for a gamer to easily create crossword puzzles. It generated the squares, completed the layout, assembled hint lists and even produced a solved puzzle, all suitable for printout. What had been the labor of many, many hours became a relatively simple exercise in home computing, as fans began to generate specialty puzzles using their own words.

Crosscheck, from
Intellicreations/Datasoft, advanced the crossword art from 1985 to 1986. On-screen dice determined the length of the

word, and each

player deciphered clues, then entered the answer at his or her starting bar at the center of the screen. After the first placement, words could be placed anywhere on the board. The contest depended more on strategic placement of letters and blanks than on solving the clues. The object was to block other players' moves while completing an unbroken chain of letters between the starting bar and the players' home base. One to four players could participate, within a preselected time limit or point limit, on the diamond-shaped game board.



FCI's Boxxle

Puzzles to Perplex the Masters

Puzzle programs became more popular than ever before during the late '80s—and it's no wonder. Classic puzzle

forms are left in the shade when compared with the newest members of this family of entertainment. Gone are static playfields, dull graphics and laborious input methods. In their place are new forms of puzzle solving that take advantage of the microprocessor to keep the games lively.

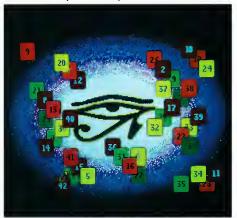
No discussion of puzzles would be complete without a mention of *Shang-hai* (Activision for all computers). Derived from mah-jongg, the game



Miles Computing's Puzzle Gallery with the At the Carnival module

uses 144 tiles in seven suits. These are stacked in a five-level pyramid, and the user is challenged to remove all the tiles in pairs until all are gone or no additional match-ups can be made. As each pair is matched, they disappear, exposing the hidden tiles underneath. There are a variety of player modes, including solitaire, against the computer or multi-player tournaments.

Shanghai, designed by Brodie Lockard, is the world's most-often published computer game, available now on 24 systems. A new version of the hit game, Shanghai 2.0, was introduced this year for the Macintosh II. It has enhanced graphics, larger tiles, livelier artwork that utilizes up to 256 colors and an improved victory screen.



Miles Computing's The Fool's Errand

Ishido (Epyx for most computers) featured the original producer and graphics designer for Shanghai. If anything, this 1989 game is even better than the previous cardpairing contest, and the graphics are more stunning and original.







Ishido players are challenged to place 72 randomized stones on a board. Each stone can only be placed next to another that matches it in at least one attribute (color or symbol). When a stone is placed so that it touches two or more other tiles, it has to match a different attribute on each side. This is a strategist's field day. At first, when the board is empty or has only a few stones, it's very easy to place new tiles in position. As the board fills, it becomes increasingly difficult to find stones that will match with two, three or even four others.

The carefully drawn stones feature 3-D graphics. The game comes with a choice of stone sets on disk, plus an art box so players can create their own personalized stones and backgrounds.

Cliff Johnson's The Fool's Errand (Miles Computing for IBM and Macintosh) was inspired by the tarot. Four kingdoms are about to go to war, and the player (the "fool") has to wander through the land, recreate a long-lost map and find treasures that will avert the disaster. The adventure unfolds in text sections, but in order to read these, the fool must dispel enchantments. This is done by completing a

The mini-games are a mix of jigsaws, mazes, word-search-(continued on page 130)



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(continued from page 127)

es, anagrams, cryptograms and other puzzles, and the gamer can tackle them in any order. Some are easy, but others will require a lot of mental agility to complete. The graphics are outstanding; each puzzle seems to spring off the screen at the player. There's a lot of life in this puzzle anthology, and the real "fool" would be the person who overlooked this remarkable program.

Cliff Johnson is a man who loves his puzzles, a fact proven by his latest creation, *The Puzzle Gallery* (Miles Computing for IBM and Macintosh). Designed to accept future puzzle disks, the first program comes packaged with a collection of challengers called *At the Carnival*.

The collection contains 40 attractions crammed with 180 different puzzles. These include word-search games, jigsaws, blocks, polygons, concatenations, crosswords, jumbles, codes and mazes. Every puzzle has an instructions menu on-screen, and the attractive graphics add a lot to the classic games.

Nintendo's programmable pocketsized entertainer Game Boy is attracting designer attention. FCl's first cartridge for Game Boy is a brain game that requires the player to



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move boxes into their proper spaces. There are 108 screens in *Boxxle*, including three editing screens that let you design puzzles of your own.

Kaleidokubes (Artworx), written by Bob and Betsy Couch, features multicolored cubes that must be placed



Miles Computing's The Fool's Errand

on an 11 x 11 game board. The object is to place the cube so that it matches the color of the adjacent cube on the side that it touches. More points are earned for matching more than one side, and the best scores go to players who can place cubes that have four sides of color matched. Gamers can play solitaire, compete against each other or go up against the computer in an effort to make the most matches in the least amount of time.

California Dreams' offering for puzzlers is Block Out (most systems). This resembles Tetris turned on end. In Block Out, the gamer is faced with a three-dimensional view of a pit. Three-dimensional blocks fall into the pit, and they must be rotated and maneuvered into proper positions to form complete layers across the bottom of the pit. When a layer is completed, it disappears. The pit can be customized for length, width and depth, the block set can be extended and a special help feature acts as a tutor. This is purely addictive. The Tetris-style play action combined with the exciting threedimensional pit is sure to keep players coming back again and again, particularly since every game produces different block combinations to keep the fun fresh.

Avantage's Mental Blocks is a threein-one puzzler's delight. Free Fall is a Tetris-style game, but in three dimensions. Falling shapes must be fit into a predetermined space in a style of play that the Russian game introduced.

The second game on the disk is

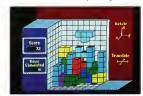
The California Achievement Cubes, a takeoff on a standard I.Q. test. In this game, the player must identify a rotating cube before the opponent recognizes it. What's Next Pussycat is based on another intelligence test. In this skill tester,

four shapes are

presented in logical sequence, and the player must be the first to identify the next geometric shape. The colored geometric shapes, spinning and twisting across the screen, add a lot to these rather plain-jane games.

The Puzzling Future

Puzzle lovers are an insatiable bunch. As soon as they complete one



Accolade's Mental Blocks

challenge, they immediately start looking around for another problem to solve. Publishers know this, so they stay on the alert for interesting new forms of this old style of gaming. Computer designers are bent on making pencil-and-paper gaming obsolete, so they constantly seek ways to replace the tools of puzzling with computer technology. The result is a never-ending trickle of classic brainteasers in new styles replete with sparkle, animation and graphic enhancement.

Or, to paraphrase an old saying, "Puzzlers, you ain't seen nothing yet!" **1**



What's a
"Good Game,"
Anyway?
by

Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and disc with it is knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This

question of what separates good computer and video games from the also-rans. result of the temporary fusion between game and gamer during play can

determine whether the rating is

"triumph" or "trash."

time, he delves into the

When a designer, programmer, software-company executive or game reviewer analyzes a game, it's an attempt to intellectualize an essentially emotional process. We cloak our judgments in objective prose, but fine words fly out the window when that disk or cartridge

boots and gaming begins.

Take Tetris, just about everyone's choice for Game of the Year in 1988. The Russian-designed strategy contest is a crude production in many respects, compared to top-line American entertainment software. It has a clumsy setup, few meaningful play options and a slightly cumbersome control system.

Under ordinary circumstances, "objective judgment" and "educated guesses" would have doomed any chance that *Tetris* would be published professionally. No manufacturer would risk big money on a game that is definitely not state-of-the-art.

Software companies are run by shrewd businessmen, not rabid gamers. They often have little time, and less inclination, to play electronic games. Since it's impossible to discover the magnificence of *Tetris* without building a few walls in the pit, it is an easy program for non-gamers to underestimate.

The decision on *Tetris* was not based exclusively on the usual criteria, however, because of its exotic pedigree as the first Soviet-exported video game. This pushed *Tetris* over the hump and into the hands of reviewers and gamers. Folks quickly discovered that *Tetris* is compulsive, addictive fun with almost infinite replayability. The result: a surprise hit, critical raves and an armload of awards.

So discussion of what makes a good game must start with the understanding that anything I (or anyone else) say is only an educated guess. On the other hand, it is largely the educated guesses of software company officials that determine which games get published and which enter electronic limbo.

This column will not try to convince you to like games for certain reasons that I think are important. Rather, I want to offer a little insight into the way games are selected for publication and,

don't know much about art, but I know what I like," is a phrase often heard around art museums—and it's usually derogatory. It mocks know-nothing gallery goers who lack the perspective and cultivated taste to appreciate anything more sophisticated than a toreador on black velvet.

One person's cliche is sometimes another's wisdom. Games and paintings are both art with a capital A, but they are as different from each other as a comic book is from a poem. The sophisticated insights of learned critics reign supreme in the world of oils and watercolors, but "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like" has considerable applicability in electronic gaming.

No matter how brilliant the painting, the viewer remains apart from it. It hangs on a wall, complete. The art and the viewer stay separate. The painting may affect the audience, but the audience can't do anything to change the picture.

The hallmark of video and computer games is interactivity. It is possible to just watch, but that isn't the main event. You have to pick up that controller and interact with it—enter the designer's microworld—to enjoy the artistic experience.

Those who write commentaries about paintings are arbiters of taste, but game reviewers function as guides for gamers who can't see everything that's available and can't afford everything they see. The art maven tells readers why they should like a painting, but the game analyst explains why a player might like a particular piece of software.

No one makes an intellectual decision to like or dislike a game. No matter how reviewers rhapsodize about the elegant simplicity of Shanghai or the glitzy thrills of Test Drive, they can't convince even one person to like either one. Only the

later, evaluated by magazine reviewers.

Wheat or Chaff?

Software companies don't use exactly the same measurements as reviewers. That's reasonable, since a manufacturer has to consider the economic consequences, while a critic limits the evaluation to the actual program. (A few critics limit their evaluation to the documentation and package box copy, but you'll never read their work in this magazine.)

Since I'm a critic, it's much easier to speak authoritatively about the standards critics apply to new gameware. I can make shrewd guesses about the publishers' and retailers' criteria, but empirical evidence proves that no game developer has a total grasp of their motivation.

These are the things I look for when I rate a new entertainment product.

 Theme—The subject is important because unless the game situation has some intrinsic appeal, it is not likely to have much impact on players.

Ho-hum themes are a big reason why so much British software fails to capture America's imagination. An elaborate support structure is not very important in the U.K. market, so designers don't spend much time working on a believable and original story to explain the action. It's common practice to finish the game, graft a rudimentary plot onto the completed product at the last minute and let it go.

Theme includes the appeal and appropriateness of any license attached to the title. Right now, publishers strongly desire a tie-in from another branch of the mass media for their important releases, and sales of license-based games are good enough to justify this interest.

The two questions to ask when scoping a licensed game: Is the property interesting? Is the game a reasonable reflection of the license it represents? If no one cares about the license, they won't be excited by a game on the same subject. And if the game doesn't properly mirror its license, it is bound to disappoint those who bought it primarily because of the tie-in.

 Graphics—Rivetting graphics and cartoon-quality animation are the main factors responsible for the rebirth of video games in 1987.
 Nothing grabs and holds attention like stunning visuals.

Anyone's artwork can blow the player's mind for a few minutes. Graphics that are woven into the central fabric of the game, not just add-on flourishes, are the key to long-term gaming pleasure. The critic judges the graphics within the context of the overall program, not in isolation.

Captain Blood earned deserved

Without the right game play, the most beautiful graphics, sound and animation add up to a fancy demo.

praise for its graphics at first look, but the program did not wear well with players, because things like the stunning planetary explosions seemed beside the point to most. The same design group's Hostage, while not as eye-popping in an absolute sense, uses art and animation with much greater effectiveness. As a result, it has reaped more success in the U.S. than its flashier line mate.

 Audio—Critics used to lump this in with the art as "audio-visual effects," but today's cutting-edge games use sound more extensively and expertly than anyone imagined was possible five years ago.

As with graphics, the key is not absolute quality, but how much the music, sound and synthetic speech enhance actual play. Some foreign designers add a thunderous rock score to ordinary shoot-'em-ups. Most players like a pulsing backbeat, but this approach doesn't exploit the potential of music the way a game like Rocket Ranger does.

 Playability—The best game in the world isn't worth the disk on which it's duplicated if it is too hard for most people to learn and play. A good game requires a logical, understandable user interface. If the player knows what to do but can't figure out how to make the machine understand, it's almost certainly the kiss of death for the product.

Quick response to order entry is another facet of playability. Nothing destroys the play experience like uncertainty about which commands the program has accepted. Any delay in generating feedback for the player should be viewed with suspicion.

- Replayability—"Top shelf" titles cost \$30-\$60. The customer has the right to expect plenty of fun for that kind of money. A game should either be quite long or it should be the kind of contest that a gamer can play again and again. Programs with less than ten hours of play life make critics nervous. Anything over 40 hours earns bonus points from this critic.
- Game Play—I've saved this for last because it is the single most significant aspect in rating a game. The other factors already discussed are important, but games live or die on the appeal of their play action.

The victory conditions and the method by which the player achieves them constitute the play action. A game must make someone care about winning or it will fail. If the things the player has to do to fulfill the victory conditions are boring, overly repetitive or physically uncomfortable, the interaction between the user and the program can't possibly be enjoyable. Without the right game play, the most beautiful graphics, sound and animation add up to a fancy demo.

These are the big guns in the critic's arsenal. A good reviewer also takes into account many other things which, though less important, can combine to make a big difference in overall quality. These include options, utility screens and documentation.

But as I said at the outset, we critics are only guides through the software jungle. We spot the most promising new titles, but it is the verdict of the joystick jury—the video and computer gamers—that determines every game's true rating.



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an ominous black hole by hitting a ball,
Pong-style, with a pair of vertically controllable paddles. The difference here is
that instead of the normal Breakout plot,
most levels require the player to hit certain objects in a precise order before
moving on.

Basic Orb Control

The trick to Black Hole is learning to control the orb well enough to place it precisely where it is needed. Keep in mind that the orb will rebound at only five different angles. Hitting the paddle dead center will, of course, send the orb straight across the screen horizontally. If the orb hits slightly above or below the center, it will veer up or down at an angle of approximately 20 degrees. Finally, hitting the orb with the edge of the paddle will result in a 45-degree rebound. By mastering these angles, one can quickly place the ball just about anywhere.

Another obstacle to overcome is mastering the orb's diving techniques. In order to hit an object, aim the orb toward it and hit the button when the ship is about half an inch from a collision. This lead time is necessary due to the period it takes the orb to execute the dive. Remember that a dive may only be initiated in the middle third of the screen. If a



The best part of Beyond the Black Hole is figuring out the puzzles.



Head west for a totally gnarly California Games experience, dude!

dive is attempted too close to the edges, it will fail; so be ready by having the paddles waiting there should this tragedy take place.

The refueling option should only be executed when the orb is in critical condition, because using it shrinks the paddle size. Once the refueling station appears, use the strategy discussed earlier to quickly maneuver the orb through the open portals.

A Note on the Puzzles

Since figuring out the puzzles is the best part of the game, it's best not to give too much away. However, a few hints early on can't hurt. Level 2 is called eight ball and is similar to the billiards game: The eight ball must be hit last. Level 4 features six ducks placed randomly on the screen. These guys have a thing about being on the same level, if you get the idea. Finally, on Level 6, the player is confronted by two horizontal rows of four closed eyes, with one extra eye in the middle. Hitting the middle one before all the others are removed will result in one big eyesore!

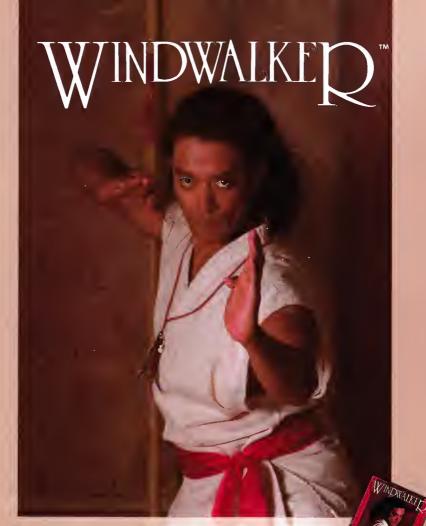
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toss and kick their way through six events in an attempt to claim this prestigious title.

Half-Pipe Skateboarding

The secret to good skateboarding is maintaining control at all times. If the board is going too fast, stop the up-anddown motion and slow the skater down until it feels comfortable again. Although there are three stunts players may perform, the hand plant is the one to concentrate on. The plant not only slows the skater down a bit, it can also be performed twice in a row at both ends of the pipe for a real score booster. As a matter of fact, scores of well over 12,000 points can be obtained simply by performing hand plants. To get the most out of the plant, remember to push the button just as the skater hits the top of the pipe. Releasing is another story. Do not wait until the board hits the pipe as the instructions suggest-this will always result in a flop. Instead, try to release just after the board passes over the skater's head in midair. With practice, scores of over 675 points can be achieved with a single plant.

This is not to say that the other two stunts are useless. However, since the kick turns require a slow pace and are only worth upward of 300 points, they can be avoided. As for aerial turns, if the skater's speed is way up there, go for it. dude!

Foot Bag

The foot bag is a much more laid-back event, where variety is definitely the key. Practice the moves described in the book until they become familiar. Once competition begins, make a strong effort to perform each move one at a time until every move is complete. Although it seems strange to perform the lesser valued moves instead of the harder ones, variety is what earns the big points with these judges. While performing the Doda can get the bagger 5,000 points, turning in a variety of six or more moves awards the player a variety bonus of over 36,000 points!

Once all the moves have been completed, tack on additional points by per-



Hit the half pipe with your, like, skateboard, and jam on all the rippin' tricks

vou've learned

to kick out.

HOLLYWOOD

forming the harder moves like the Doda or the double arch.

Surfing

The trick to surfing is to keep the surfer in the top half of the wave, close to the "tube," as much as possible. Low scores are earned by staying toward the bottom, no matter what stunts are performed. The judges are big fans of turns—high points are obtained by turning up toward the top of the wave and then turning back just as the tip of the board hits the crest. This is called "catching air." Be careful not to wait too long before the cut back, or the surfer will wipe out.

The other highly valued stunts are the 180 and the 360. A 180-degree turn can be done in the top half of the wave much

the same way as catching air. The 360 requires a bit more wave to complete successfully and should only be attempted if the surfer is below the halfway point of the wave.

Another valuable stunt is to ride the board over the top of the wave and turn 180

degrees in the air to come back down on it. The trick here is to make sure the board is exactly 180 degrees from the position it was when it left the wave. Landing at any other angle will result in a totally radical wipeout!

Roller Skating

Skating is a game of steady rhythm. Start by building a steady pace of upand-down movement to get the skater to move evenly across the walkway. Holding the stick in one direction too long will cause the skater to wander in that direction. Compensate by holding the stick in the other direction a bit longer on the next stroke. While skating in this manner, simply press the button right before the skater reaches an obstacle to jump over it. Sounds simple, yet keeping an even rhythm can be tricky for the novice player.

Once the player is secure in skating, he or she can rack up the big points by doing 360s. The best way to accomplish



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one is to press the button as the skater approaches an obstacle and rotate the stick all the way around instead of the usual up-and-down rotation. If done correctly, the skater will jump and do a 360 in the air, earning big points.

BMX Bike Racing

Here is a sport which requires precise timing and more than a touch of patience. Start by taking it slow. Get a feel for the track, and learn where the biggest hills are located. These are the only places where the four "in-the-air" stunts should be attempted. It is not possible to complete these four stunts at any other point, and attempts to do so will result in a serious wipeout that promptly ends the competition. Once the biker reaches the top of a large ramp, timing comes into play. The player must hit the button just as the front wheel hits the edge of the ramp. If

that's not hard enough, he or she must then do the desired stunt *immediately* after the button is pressed. Even a onesecond delay will not give the biker enough hang time to complete the stunt. Remember also that the tabletop stunt requires the player to press the stick up and release it before the biker touches down, or he will wipe out.

The rest of the track is pretty straightforward. Players get points for jumping over or avoiding obstacles. Extra points can be earned by making sure that you are always doing something, never just coasting along. If the biker is on a small stretch of track with no obstacles, do a wheelie or simply jump the bike up and down. These simple tasks can earn the biker up to 400 points each!

The Flying Disk

The flying disk is probably the easiest event to master. The trick is to throw the

Do a wheelie or jump the bike!

disk at the right time. Try to release the disk when the power level is in vellow (not green as the instructions suggest). This makes the disk descend to the left of the catcher, which is perfect because catches made from the right of the disk are worth more. The catcher's job is made easier by reducing the need to run all the way right and then back again to get under the disk from the right side. Once the disk begins descending, remember that it falls at a steady rate; so by watching its line of descent on the upper screen, one can judge pretty well where it will come down. Keep the man to the left of this point, and once the disk reaches elbow level, jump left and make a diving catch. After a couple of runs, it's like totally possible, dude! -E.T.



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(continued on page 148)

INTENDO FEVER



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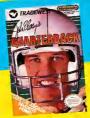
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COMPUTER GAME

Heavy Barrel

DATA EAST Versions: Apple (\$34.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)



Arcade-style shoot-'em-up action combines with some of the violent flavor of Japanese animated adventure as a

gutsy commando (or two, since a pair can play this game) infiltrates a terrorist-occupied subterranean missile complex. It's tough enough just getting through the outer defenses to the first door, which is several feet thick and steel-reinforced, let alone past it. Then there are six more defense perimeters, each with a variety of obstacles that are hazardous to our hero's continued existence. All must be broached in order to destroy the leader before the terrorists launch the nuclear missiles.

Arcade fans should be thoroughly familiar with the action in Heavy Barrel, since the coin-op version of the game made it to the top-five listing for several months. For new players, there's a demo mode that takes a pair of heroes as far as a bridge outside the fortress walls, battling all the way. After that, commandos, you're on your own!

There is more to Heavy Barrel than shooting action. The game incorporates strategic elements, plus a puzzle that must be solved before the goal can be reached. A variety of weapons are available, usually left behind by deceased terrorists, but the one weapon that offers any chance of success, the heavy barrel itself, is hidden in pieces within the fortress.







Data East's Heavy Barrel contains strategic elements as well as a puzzle that has to be solved before the end can be reached.

The puzzle lies in locating all the pieces. They're stored in lockers, and the commando must collect keys to open the lockers, then find a place to store and assemble the superweapon. Its overwhelming power may be used for a maximum of 99 seconds for further demolition of terrorists and penetration into the depths of the fortress. But cheer up, once that heavy barrel is depleted, another can be collected and assembled.

In addition to the big gun that gave the game its name there are also automatic weapons such as the gruesome grinder and doomsday grenades. If those aren't enough to keep the gamer alert, there are some exceptionally annoying vermin—poisonous insects whose bites bring instant death.

Some sense of the origin of this game is shown in the way the participants handle themselves. The terrorists, for example, have a Far Eastern style of sitting down on the ground when not moving. Our hero's death is symbolized by his raising his arms in surrender. Unlike some games, however, he gets to start off his next life from the same point, though under essentially the same fire.

Single players can use either joystick or keyboard control. When two gamers compete, they must decide who gets the stick and who will use the keyboard option.

The graphics show the gallant hero moving through the complex in angled, overhead perspective. Buildings, foliage and other details are well drawn. Sometimes these provide a little cover to shield the warrior. The terrorists face off against our main man in fire fights that require quick reflexes and good aim if the hero is to survive.

Surrounding the centered play area, which occupies about half the screen, is a tangle of pipes and conduits that forms the backdrop for score counters and lives indicators, plus the tallies for keys, ammunition and collected pieces of the big gun. When the weapon is assembled, an on-screen timer tracks the remaining time available.

Heavy Barrel brings little that is new or innovative to the home screen. It follows squarely in the footsteps of other search-and-destroy commando-style games. Fortunately, those are good steps to follow, and Heavy Barrel does a nice job of implementing the assault. This is an exciting style of gaming. As long as there are terrorists to topple and dangers to disburse, compu-commandos will enlist to battle the bullies.

-Ross Chamberlain

Data East, 470 Needles Dr., San Jose, CA 95112; (408) 286-7074.

Beyond the Black Hole

SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS
Versions: Commodore 64 (\$49.95),
IBM PC (\$49.95)



Beyond the Black Hole is part Pong, part IQ test and part 3-D comic book. Despite the science-

fiction plot described on the back of the box, this is no adventure game. Rather, it's a series of 35 puzzles, each unique, played on a floating grid in space. The puzzles vary widely in difficulty; there is everything from a chess problem to a round of scissors-paper-stone. Solving even the simplest puzzle requires patience and a keen sense of spatial relations. That's because the only implement for manipulating the puzzle pieces is an orb.

The orb is always in motion, bouncing between two paddles in an action similar to wall-bashing contests. The computerist controls these paddles with mouse or joystick to make sure the orb stays in play. Strap on the provided 3-D glasses



Beyond the Black Hole, from The Soft-ware Tool-works, contains level after level of puzzles mixed with wild 3-D visual effects.



and the orb isn't just bouncing, it's actually in orbit around the grid, receding into the depths of the monitor and then rising off the surface.

The orb can be made to dive or rise at any moment. When it collides with a puzzle piece, it makes that piece move or mutate or do any of a dozen weird things. Thus, the goal is not only to solve the puzzle but to figure out



what the puzzle is and then maneuver the orb so it lands on the pieces in the right

sequence.

The orb has a limited fuel supply that's a major concern throughout the game. If the player allows the orb to wander off the screen, nearly half the fuel is lost. Renegade pieces, called "fuel pirates," occasionally appear to steal fuel. Evade these pirates long enough and they turn into orbs, producing multi-ball play.

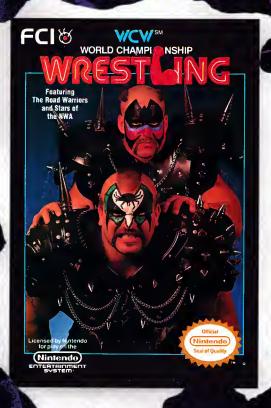
The refueling sequence requires the player to loop the orb through a series of irises. The irises close by themselves, so the refueling maneuver must be completed with speed and efficiency. Done correctly, this is an extremely elegant sequence, a sort of zero-gravity ballet.

The 3-D effect works beautifully. This is not the red/blue of 3-D comic books; this is full-color Grenovision, similar to that used for the 1989 Super Bowl halftime show. Fortunately, for those who can't experience 3-D, the game can be played just as easily without the glasses. The graphics are cleverly animated and full of visual gags. Even the sounds are commendable, used judiciously and imaginatively.

The manual is overly skimpy, which is disappointing and a little surprising in this otherwise well-conceived product. It leaves the player on his own to discover most of the finer points of the game. Look for version 1.02 or later. It adds a simplified opening puzzle to give the player a chance to become acquainted with the interface.

Included in the package are Grenovision glasses, a guide to the history of 3-D and a pair of red/blue glasses to view the guide's pictures. A second pair of Grenovision glasses would

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have been nice, since this is the sort of game you'll want to show your friends.

The game's replayability is questionable. Once all the puzzles have been solved, there's not much temptation to do them again. But that doesn't detract much from its entertainment value. This is a very impressive action game that demands intelligence and imagination. In a world full of imitative "me too" games, Beyond the Black Hole is a whimsical breath of fresh air.

—Joshua Mandel

Software Toolworks, 19808 Nordhoff Place, Chatsworth, CA 91311; (818) 885-9000.

Dark Side

CINEMAWARE

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari 5T (\$39.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)



Dark Side is a fully three-dimensional, smoothly scrolling shoot-'em-up adventure, where all obsta-

cles the player faces are made up of simple geometric shapes: triangles, diamonds, rectangles and so on. These polygon-filled graphics combine to create a complete world in which to explore and do battle.

The story behind Dark Side is standard science-fiction fare: A planet called Evath was colonized by Earth once upon a time. Punishment for criminals was simple; banishment to one of Evath's moons. But being foolhardy crooks, the banished criminals laid their prison moon to waste. Since they couldn't return to Evath, they set up shop on Evath's spare moon, Tricuspid. This moon is too soft to build on, so the convicts, called Ketars, constructed an artificial world of their own. This "geometric platform" makes up the game field. The treacherous lot of ne'er-do-wells has now decided to take revenge on Evath by destroving it.

Equipped with a jet propulsion





Your primary mission in Cinemaware's Dark Side is to travel to the moons of Evath and take on the criminals that have been exiled there.

backpack with limited fuel and shield power supply, the player takes the role of a one-man army against the Ketars, who have set up Energy Collection Device (ECD), towers with diamond-shaped solar collectors at the top.

When the ECDs accumulate enough energy, all their power is piped to the Zephyr One, a monstrous laser cannon that obliterates the planet Evath. The graphic effect of this laser cannon is rather simplistic. There are no *Star Wars* scenes of a planet vaporizing. In fact, the player never sees any moons or the planet Evath at any time during the game. However, the world of the Ketars' prison is large and complicated enough to keep the player exploring, blasting and dying for many games.

The play field is housed within a simulated viewscreen and is surrounded by a highly detailed frame with embedded status displays. At the top is the player's score and the current ECD power, which begins at 100%. As the towers are located and their diamond power collectors destroyed, this level decreases. The object of the game is to reduce the total ECD power to zero and save Evath from destruction by the Ketars.

At the bottom right of the display are two horizontal bars representing shield power and fuel. More of each are collected by bumping into the geometric shapes representing fuel and shield sources. At the bottom left of the display are the player's current coordinates in the Ketars' world. The angle of rotation and movement steps are also displayed in this area. These step values can be adjusted to make movements coarser while making the game play speed up, for example.

There are over 20 key commands for controlling the game. Dark Side may also be played with a joystick, but keyboard interaction is still required. It is best to master the key controls, then use the mouse to manipulate gun sights and firing (on the Atari ST). The player shoots tanklike "plexors" and peg-shaped flying saucers for self-protection but never actually comes in contact with a Ketar.

Some of the ECD pods are self-regenerating. To completely destroy

(continued on page 150)

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Stopping the Enemy With Firepower MICROILLUSIONS

Versions: Amiga, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Macintosh

Firepower places the player in control of an assault tank. The mission: Infiltrate the enemy camp, and capture their flag before they do the same to you. The game features three play styles: player vs. player, player against computer or player against a faraway friend, via modem communication.

Control of the tank is by far the hardest and sometimes the most frustrating part of mastering Firepower, Tank control is absolute (to go south, push down, etc.). Allow approximately one inch of room for the tank to make a turn. Attempting to turn in too tight a spot will result in the tank ramming into something before it can complete the maneuver. This becomes especially important when attempting a hasty retreat. Should the tank hit something, pressing the stick in the opposite direction will free it most of the time. I say most of the time because of the frustration I mentioned earlier. There is a slight problem with the program that will occasionally cause the tank to become stuck solid on or against an obstacle. Should this happen, one can only drop a mine to self-destruct and restart from base. This is why it is imperative to allow ample room for all turns.

The key to success in Firepower is to play dirty pool. The player's tank is refueled by destroying enemy fuel depots. This means that an opponent will also attempt to destroy the player's depots in order to refuel. So, when the game starts off, destroy any of the friendly depots that the tank passes. This will make it more difficult for the enemy to gas up. The same holds true for stranded troops. Since the enemy can gain points and mines by picking up troops, simply run over any enemy infantry that may escape the bunkers. While this may certainly seem cruel and morbid,



Behind the wheel of an awesome assault tank, Firepower puts you up against the enemy in their own camp.

remember, all is fair in love and war.

Don't waste time searching for the entrance to the enemy fort. Though the instructions don't mention it, it is possible to blast through a wall and gain entrance much faster than searching for the gate. The problem here, however, is that when you fire away at a wall, the tank is stationary, and the enemy helicopters are likely to lock on and begin



closing in. Don't panic—simply note the way they are headed, move out of the way

the second they fire and shoot just as they pass in front of the tank. Try to down a chopper wherever possible. They are worth big points and may come back to haunt the player.

When faced with an enemy turret, keep in mind that they only fire in eight directions. Try to approach from an odd angle to get them without being hit. Turrets do not have to be hit in the gun to be destroyed. They can be knocked out by hitting any of the green area that surrounds them. Turrets will also not fire in the direction of their own armada. Exploit this by getting between them and their own kind; then blow them away.

A player may also lay mines to increase his chances of victory. Mines would be crucial if they could be placed at key locations to halt enemy entrance. However, since the enemy can blast through walls to get to a location, laying mines is a not-so-important aspect of the game. The only sites where it's recommended to place mines are around the friendly flag and along the main roads. This will at least make the enemy work for his flag. Keep in mind, however, that mines are not prejudiced and will blow up either tank. Be sure to remember where they were placed.

Finally, if by some chance the enemy has found the flag and is headed back, begin pursuit immediately! Remember, tanks can destroy one another, and if the enemy has your flag, it's time to get tough. After all, desperate times call for desperate measures.

- F.T.



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*Sept./Oct. 1989 issue.

CIRCLE #164 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Bruderbund

GUARDIAN LEGE

(continued from page 146)

them requires solving some geometric puzzles. Shooting doors or simply walking into what appear to be walls allows access to more rooms and corridors—and more ECDs.

Dark Side has most of the features of a full-blown



flight simulator. The player easily rotates left or right a full 360 degrees and looks up and down about 90 degrees. (It isn't easy to pull an outside loop in a jet pack.) The player can readily spin clockwise or counterclockwise, however, which provides a nice effect. The player either walks through the alien landscape or enables the jet pack to rise, fall and fly. Flight is necessary to access certain elevated corridors and do battle with the flying pegs (objects that aren't named in the documentation). There are four large rectangular areas, the "light side" and the "dark side," to explore, connected in ways that are not always obvious.

The graphics are well-done, with all objects in the game nicely shaded to enhance depth perception. The game speed varies constantly, however, in inverse proportion to the number of shapes on the play field. As more objects appear the scrolling becomes noticeably slower, a minor nuisance.

On the negative side, the music is not very melodious; instead, it is intended to sound high-tech and otherworldly. I found it nerve-racking after only a few minutes and switched back to sound effects only (the music can be disabled).

There are a lot of old formulas here, applied with only minor twists. The polygon-filled graphics work well for this flight simulator-style game, though they are slower than the best flight simulators currently available. Nonetheless. Dark Side is well executed, if not particularly original, and the unusual graphics make it an attractive addition to any gamer's library.

–Matthew J. W. Ratcliff

Cinemaware, 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Westlake Village, CA 91362; (805) 495-6515.

SIERRA ON-LINE

Versians: Amiga (\$49.95), Apple II (\$49.95), Apple IIGS (\$49.95), Atari ST (\$49.95), IBM PC (\$49.95), Macintash (\$49.95)

Gold Rush



In the words of Horace Greely: "Go west, young man!" (If you are not already there.) Sierra's latest

release, Gold Rush, allows players to vicariously experience the rigors of life on a burgeoning frontier. Through the miracle of modern software, their experiences will undoubtedly be more extensive and of longer duration than some of the poor unfortunates who actually took the journey (especially since players have access to a savegame feature).

Gold Rush is a graphic adventure in the classic format that consumers have come to expect from Sierra. Players assume the persona of Jerrod Wilson, a city-born greenhorn to the nth degree. For some unknown reason, perhaps because of a long lost brother. Jerrod has decided to leave the comforts of home and strike out for fame and fortune. Prior to departing dear old Brooklyn, it is important for Jerrod to clear up his affairs (after all, there is no turning back); sell his house, buy equipment, take along a few mementos and pay final respects to the dearly departed.

When Jerrod is finally ready to go, he's confronted with an immediate monumental decision: which passage to take? As was historically the case, three distinct routes were used by the Westward expansion: the Overland Trek, the Panama Trek and the Cape Horn Trek. Each possessed unique challenges for the

dauntless settlers. The Panama Trek is the fastest,

which is important since you are working against the clock, but it is also the most difficult in terms of dangers encountered. (As compensation for the severe hardships poor

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Jerrod must endure, it is also possible to attain a higher score by traveling via the Panama route.)

Whether the settler travels over land via stagecoach, steamboat and covered wagon, by ship around Cape Horn or through Panamanian jungles, it is impossible to complete the game

without the extensive historical manual included



with the product. The answers to many of the problems Jerrod will face are contained therein, as straightforward explanations of what it was like to live during this unique period of our history. Sierra has gone to great lengths to ensure the accuracy of this product, and their respect for the past is duly noted.

The West is an unforgiving mistress, as Jerrod soon learns. Patience and perseverance do pay off, although usually not until Jerrod has expended more lives than a cat. It is important to examine all the screens closely, as most of the clues received are visual. Some items are less distinguishable than others, and these are generally worth some extra attention. Once again, be patient. The West was not won in a day, and the same maxim applies to this product.

Game play goes faster due to a parser that recognizes abbreviations for commonly used commands. All interfaces between the player and his character are smooth and efficient. Players making the transition from traditional text-based adventures for the first time may be initially aggravated by the limited vocabulary of the Sierra parser, but they will soon realize that they are involved with a completely different animal from their previous experiences.

Gold Rush hits pay dirt for a number of reasons. First, there's the novelty of the subject matter. In a market replete with spin-offs and occasional outright ripoffs, Gold Rush stands out as something completely different from the rest of the field. The authors put great effort into ensuring the historical accuracy of their product and, of course, the polished execution of the programming itself. It's well worth

investing some of your own hard earned gold to take the trek and join the Gold Rush.

-H. E. Dille

Sierra On-Line, P. O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614; (209) 683-4468.

Genghis Khan: A Study of Regal Principle

Version: IBM PC (\$59.95)

RATINGS:
Sound/Music 5
Graphics 8
Playability 8
Overall 7

Although the Eurasian tundra has never been a place of quiet solitude, it has

been some time since the sound of thousands of hoofbeats struck terror into men's hearts. Genghis Khan returns players to a time when power and honor were everything, a place where history may be rewritten

through skill and cunning. Unlike traditional war games, where the battle forms the centerpiece of the entertainment, this product is a socioeconomic simulation of life in the Middle Ages.

Two scenarios are offered, and successful completion of the first automatically starts the second. In the first scenario, Mongol Conquest. players assume the mantel of Temuiin, the Mongol chief who was to become Genghis Khan. The objective of this scenario is the unification of Mongolia, with the first turn beginning in the winter of 1174. Each year is divided into four turns-one for each season-with up to three

Koei takes

the reign of

Mongolia by Genghis Khan

and turns it

into a simula-

tion that you

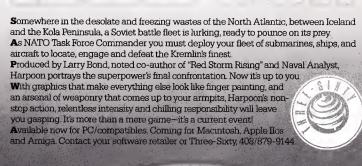
can control.

**********	Tetujin	Baser .	telgate	elonian m	Tenuge	
		1	20		(EA)	
		R				
Age	19	17	17	15	13	
Leadership	185	97	84	55	49	
Jodgement :	58	146	183	88	82	
Planning ability	162	88	138	59	152	
Personsive ebilitu	127	188	128	167	52	
Physical	128	118	62	59	53	
abilitary	116	126	99	72	63	
is this GE? (Y/80						

commands allowed during each turn.

Unification of the empire is sought through combat and diplomacy, the latter being critical to success. Economic vitality in one's base and vassal states (conquered territories) is main-

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tained through mercantile trade on fluctuating markets and careful control of production levels of numerous

resources. Popular sentiment is maintained by distribution of goods, foreign



policy and conquest. Population distribution is divided into five occupations: soldiers, town builders, castle builders, food producers and specialized labor. The first and fourth occupations are self-explanatory; town builders increase the economic base of the country; castle builders increase the defensive rating; and specialized labor produces goods related to the countries' most prevalent natural resource.

Issuing commands drains the abilities of the leader, so training is required to keep the conqueror at peak capacity. Each leader is rated for several abilities, including leadership, judgement, planning, persuasiveness and physical and military skills. Subordinate generals, called governor candidates, are rated for the same abilities,

Stohard I

Systatine Engine

Japan

Japan

Hispan | Figgs | , which character of their

Monaol Exeira

which determine a major part of their success or failure when abroad.

Several types of espionage can be conducted prior to actually initiating hostilities with other countries, running the gamut from undermining the enemy's popularity base (thereby generating a revolt) to assassination attempts. Armies must be recruited or bought (e.g., mercenaries) and trained, then distributed among cavalry, infantry and archery.

When attacking abroad, the player can either lead the armies personally or select a governor candidate to do so. Personally leading the troops makes it possible to control all movement and attack options, hunt for additional food to sustain the army, plunder the enemy towns and even call for reinforcements from neighboring states that you control. When governor candidates are used, it's not possible to directly control events.

If a battle is won, the invaded territory may be controlled three ways: as a vassal state under the leadership of the previous ruler or one of the governor candidates, under the player's direct

control (with no ruler present) or as a new base of residence for the player. If the battle is lost, the losing general (or the player himself) can be executed or set free. If the player is executed in this manner but has named an heir of appropriate age, the game may continue utilizing this character.

The second scenario, World Conquest, begins when the 14 tribes of Mongolia are unified or initially selected. Unlike its predecessor, this scenario may be played by one to four gamers, as either Genghis Khan of the Mongols, Richard I of England, Alexious III of the Byzantine Empire or Minamoto Yoritomo of Japan. The time is set in the winter of 1205. Although the basic command structure remains unchanged, the beauty of the second scenario lies in the interaction generated among

players off the terminal.

Set up as a historically carrect cantest, Genghis Khan shauld satisfy the simulation nut with great graphics and quality actian.

Genghis Khan functions extremely well as a multi-player game, with rapid-turn resolution and minimal dead time between turns. Whenever it's

impossible to get four human players together, the artificial intelligence of the computer opponents is quite intricate and challenging and can be increased via a difficulty level setting.

Genghis Khan is an outstanding simulation that transcends normal genre boundaries to provide players with something truly unique for their libraries. The graphics are stunning, play is fast-paced and exciting and



the detailed interaction means that no

two games are alike. This product will seem as fresh the 100th time played as it does when first booted. Koei has continued to improve an already impressive gaming environment with this release.

-H. E. Dille

Koei Corporation, One Bay Plaza, 1350 Bayshore Hwy., Burlingame, CA 94010; (415) 348-0200.



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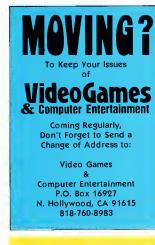
(continued from page 52)

flavor. It's more involved with quests and subquests than Zelda and more linear. In Zelda, you didn't have to follow a specific path to the end. In Scheherazade, you must complete each section in order if you want to advance.

The Magic of Scheherazade is fun to play—not too difficult but satisfying. Some of the graphics are wonderful (especially the fire demon in Level 4) and overall, they are consistently good. The music and sounds are fine, and the player interface is very good. I found it pretty easy to cruise through, especially with the help that the detailed manual provides. However, the last encounter is a toughie. You'll need good strategy and good reflexes to win and save the world.

--Rusel DeMaria

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Gets

ing in the Doc's life, and we'll get to them a little later, but first, some questions and controversy. Our first letter is representative of a small but vocal minority who seem to think that when one purchases a computer- or video-game system, one enlists in an army, the purpose of which is to exalt itself and the system it represents. Like most soldiers, members of this army know only two strategies: attack, attack, attack; or defend, defend, defend. Despite the first letter writer's hos-

tile and abusive tone, he raises some points that should be addressed. Because of the number of points, I will break with my usual practice and interject responses throughout the letter.



I was very depressed to hear your degrading remarks [about] the Atari ST. [Your comment that] the ST doesn't have a sound chip that meets C-64 standards, well, that's a bunch of bull. The ST will blow away the IBM at sound. Are you saying the C-64 has better sound than an IBM? IYes, I think the C-64 has better sound than an IBM, but that's beside the point, isn't it? The advantage the IBM has-despite its terrible built-in sound system-is its ability to add on-sound boards as peripherals, like the Ad Lib, Roland and Covox systems.1

Have you ever used an ST? [I certainly have. I love my ST. It sits right in my office next to my Mac, C-128 and Epson PC clone, And would you believe it? They get along just great!]

[Regarding the IBM], I would like to know who would buy a \$1,000 machine to play games on and that's it? [Well, since computers are not supposed to be elaborate game machines, but rather multipurpose business and entertainment tools, that's also beside the point. Frankly, I don't know many ST users who don't use their computers for everything from word processing to telecommunications. Game playing is simply one dimension of the computer universe-even if it is the most important dimension for many of us.]

The real fact is you guys don't know how to tell the truth or you get [your] facts mixed up! I won't buy this magazine again!

PS: I forgot, I will look [at] the magazine again to see if you print this, but it will be a waste of my money, because I don't expect you to print it.

> —Kenneth Gerard Westland, Michigan



It's tough to convince someone you're being honest and objective when they don't believe you are, but look at it this way, Ken: What would my motivation be? I like the ST: I wish it had been an enormous success in the U.S., but it wasn't, and all the wishing and all the acrimony in the world won't change that fact. That doesn't mean you should dump vour ST; vou should keep buying new software and enjoying it. But why this compulsive need to attack other systems and any messengers who report news you'd rather not hear? C'mon, Ken, let's play nice, okay? We're all in this gaming hobby together.



Technically, what is the best video game entertainment system, NES or SMS? On the back of all Sega 8-bit systems, they list the unit's numerical statistics. What are Nintendo's?

> -Edgar B. Schodde Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



For non-Sega owners, the numbers Edgar refers to are as follows: 128K ROM, 64K RAM, 128K video RAM, 64 colors, 256 x 192 resolution and three four-octave sound generators with one white noise. Characters are 8 x 8 pixels, with a maximum of 448; sprites are 8 x 8. with a maximum of 256.

Nintendo does not make its technical specs available, and the developers we spoke to were reluctant to share that information for publication. You can draw your own conclusions from that.

However, let me share a story with you that may help point out how deceptive such specs can be in terms of evaluating system potential. I had the occasion to discover the world of RAM and ROM when I was a mere Game Intern, spending my evenings gutting Atari 2600s and Intellivisions to see what made them beep. I soon

CIRCLE #169 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

learned that these primitive systems were designed to handle 2 to 4K ROM cartridges and had special software tricks like bank switching to vault that number as high as 8K.

Well, let me tell you, I was pretty darned impressed by what could be done with a couple of kilobits of memory. I then learned that the mighty Apple II+ computer routinely handled 48K of memory. 48K! Games on the Apple, I therefore reasoned, would offer a minimum of six times the sound, graphics and game play of the video-game systems!

Needless to say, my disappointment with the Apple II+ as a game system was profound indeed. For all its vaunted memory capacity, other limitations (a lack of sprites, most notably) dictated that it was several years before the typical Apple II game came anywhere close to the sound and graphic standards set by the humble 2 to 4K game machines.

The point is, a game system can only be truly judged by one thing: its games. Most users familiar with both systems acknowledge that the Sega has superior graphic and animation capabilities; but though the two systems are comparably priced and appeared in the marketplace at approximately the same time, the NES has outsold the SMS by a factor of at least 12 to 1. The reason? The NES has more games (through itself and thirdparty publishers), reflecting a wider range of genres and styles than the SMS, which has stressed arcade action to the near exclusion of other game types.

So, which system has the games you most enjoy playing? This remains the surest method of determining which system is the best system—for you.

The only numbers that really mean anything in a video or computer game are the CPU's bits and the overall game's bits (or, in this day and age, megabits), which leads us to our next question.



I have read several references in your magazine to "third-party software" and gather that it refers to soft-



S P E C I A L N O T E

he old Gema Doctor is approaching the next plateau in his madical caraar-thet is, I'm moving to the sunny Wast to sip lemonade at poolside, instaed of paaring down tha cartridga slots of crusty old 2600s. Yes, I'm giving up my "liva" practice to take things easy and concentrate ell my afforts on this column and collacting a nice tan. So, while I can already haer mv patients' wails of anguish over this, you reeders will find I now have avan mora time to devota to the ceaseless business of providing "A"s for your "Q"s.

I want to personally thenk ell of you who have sant in questions-our office received almost 100 quarias last waak elonel Of coursa, this incradible volume of mail dictetes thet each end every question can't he answered. Remember, this column doas not give specific geme tips end hints-that job Is handlad quita wall by paopla like Andy Eddy and Frank Tetro in stretegy faatures elsewhere in vacce. But if you have e question ebout geme hardware or softwere, write it up as succinctly as possible and the bast, most representative of them will be answered right here!

Send all future questions, comments, geme tokens end gambling chips to my new eddress: The Geme Doctor, 330 S. Decetur, Suita 152, Las Vegas, Nevada 88107. The odds are vary good that you'll get an enswer.

ware produced by a publisher other than the hardware manufacturer. Software produced by the hardware manufacturer, therefore, must be "first-party software," right? So what the heck is "second-party software"?

> —Adam Aiello Stonybrook, New York



Darn good question, Adam. Would you believe that in the almost ten years that I've been scribing this column, you are only the second person (or party) to ever ask?

The answer: Second-party software is that which is created by you, the user. The hardware manufacturer is, as you surmised, the first party and other publishers are third party. Obviously, there is very little second-party software on video-game systems, as there is no input device, such as a keyboard, with which to program the system. This term is used mostly in the computer universe.

V-Maxed Out—Okay, gang, I want you to know the Game Doctor can be relentless in the pursuit of truth; a veritable bulldog when aroused. A couple of issues back, I sunk my teeth into a problem posed by James and Rhea Meurer of Saugus, California, who could not run any programs on their C-64 that used the V-Max fast-loading system. True, my advice to them up to this point has been totally useless, but that has not deterred me! I have slogged ever onward toward the silver-white light of illumination and, finally, I think I have an answer. The downside is that I'm afraid it won't be of any more use to you than my previous attempts.

According to Activision's technical support people, some of the newer series 1541 disk drives for the C-64 are incompatible with the V-Max fast loader. Specifically, the ROM-Sys mixes badly with V-Max because, in Activision's case, the copy protection is included in the fast-load program. In any case, they had no solution other than to suggest a different model drive. Sorry this took so long, folso, and I'm even sorrier the news isn't good, but at least you finally got an answer.

8efore you trade in your disk drives, however, make sure there are no cartridges or peripherals (printer, modem, etc.) attached to the computer during loading, since they can also interfere with the process.

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